

Inspection of a good school: St Francis Catholic Primary School

Whyteleafe Road, Caterham, Surrey CR3 5ED

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 October 2021

Outcome

St Francis Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive for their school day full of enthusiasm and keen to learn. They feel safe and are confident that school staff will support them, both with their learning and with any worries that they might have. One pupil said, 'This school gives me comfort. I would never want to go anywhere else'.

Staff have high expectations for every child across the curriculum. They are determined that every child will learn to read, as they know that this is the key to being able to learn successfully in other subjects.

Behaviour is excellent at this school. Right from the start of Reception, children settle quickly into routines. They follow adults' instructions carefully and conscientiously. In accordance with the Christian ethos of the school, staff use a restorative approach to managing behaviour, emphasising forgiveness. Pupils told the inspector that unkind behaviour is very rare.

Most parents who shared their views during this inspection said that the school was welcoming and inclusive. They appreciated how positive their children were about school and about learning. Parents reported that staff and leaders provide children and their families with an exceptionally high level of support and care.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Children at the school get off to a good start with their early reading, learning phonics right from their first days in Reception. Staff ensure that the books that younger children read help them to practise the sounds that they have learned. If any pupil is not on track with their reading, they receive regular support with phonics and read frequently with an adult. Staff work diligently to ensure that pupils develop a love of reading. Reception children are already enjoying the poetry, rhyme and storytelling that form a key part of their curriculum. All pupils enjoy the high-quality texts that are read to them daily. As they become more fluent in their reading, pupils are encouraged to read widely and often.

Well-trained staff know how to encourage older pupils to try genres and authors that they might not otherwise experience.

Leaders introduced a new mastery approach to teaching mathematics four years ago. This approach is firmly established from Reception to Year 6. Learning in mathematics is broken down into manageable steps for pupils. As pupils move through the school, most are developing into confident and able mathematicians. Some pupils need more support with their mathematics, particularly following the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic. Leaders know who these pupils are and ensure that they get the help they need to catch up. Pupils in Year 2, for example, are receiving extra support with addition and subtraction.

Across the curriculum, leaders have developed a broad and balanced programme of study. To confirm how well this was working, in 2019, leaders carried out an evaluation of each subject. They identified that they needed to refine the curriculum in some subjects to ensure that the knowledge that pupils needed to learn and remember was mapped out more precisely. Some of this work has already been undertaken, although it has been slowed by the pandemic. In history, for example, leaders are still in the process of mapping out exactly what pupils will learn within each period of history that they study. When this work is complete, teachers will be able to meaningfully build on what has been taught before. This will help pupils to connect new knowledge with what they have learned before.

Several teachers and subject leaders are new to the school or new to post. Not all teachers have strong enough subject knowledge of all the subjects they teach. This means that they do not always explain information to pupils clearly enough. Leaders know that they need to ensure that all teachers are trained to deliver the full curriculum as leaders intend. This training programme for teachers will need to be planned carefully so that, over time, teachers become increasingly expert in the wide range of subjects that they teach.

The school offers a broad range of extra-curricular clubs. Through their participation in these clubs, pupils have enriching experiences. For example, the school choir have performed at the Royal Albert Hall and at Westminster Cathedral. All pupils learn both the ukulele and the trumpet. Pupils' personal development is supported well. Leaders have thought carefully about how to give as many pupils as possible the opportunity to take on a responsible role within the school. Pupils appreciate that leaders have given thought to making the election of head boy and head girl as fair as possible. Leaders promote good behaviour very effectively. Pupils in all classes are kind, calm and ready to learn. They appreciate the six simple rules that all pupils follow.

School governors understand their role clearly. They are highly committed to the school and know the community very well. They bring a diverse range of knowledge to the governing body, which they use to proactively problem-solve and to supportively challenge leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is strong culture of safeguarding at this school. All staff act in the best interests of pupils. Staff are well trained so that they know how to identify which pupils might be at risk of harm or may have been harmed. Staff are confident that when they raise a concern about a pupil, that concern is taken seriously, and the right action is taken. Leaders refer in a timely way to ensure pupils get the help they need. Vulnerable pupils are carefully monitored and supported within school.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. They are confident that staff will always help them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have mapped out a programme of study for each foundation subject that is aligned to the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, leaders have not yet identified precisely enough the knowledge that pupils will learn over time and how this knowledge will build towards a clear end point. This means that teachers do not know precisely what pupils have learned previously and cannot build upon prior learning meaningfully. Leaders now need to carefully plan and sequence the knowledge that pupils need to learn over time to be able to reach a carefully defined, and well-understood, end point in each subject. The transition arrangements have been applied.
- A number of staff are new to the school or new to post. At present, not all staff have enough subject-specific knowledge of all of the subjects they teach. This means that information is not always presented clearly enough for pupils. Consequently, pupils are not yet developing a connected body of knowledge in each subject. Leaders should ensure that their professional development programme for teachers and staff is closely aligned with the curriculum, so that over time it develops teachers' subject knowledge and knowledge of how to teach each subject effectively.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good school could now be better than good, or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in September 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	125203
Local authority	Surrey
Inspection number	10200092
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	379
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nathalie Walsh
Headteacher	Maria Wheeler
Website	www.stfrancis.surrey.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	21 and 22 September 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new deputy headteacher took up post in September 2021.
- Since the last inspection, the school has opened a breakfast and after -club to provide before- and after-school care.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher, other members of the leadership team and staff. The inspector met with representatives of the governing board, including the chair and vice chair.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. For the early reading deep dive, the inspector listened to pupils reading to a familiar adult and reviewed records of support and

intervention for readers who had fallen behind. The inspector also spoke to leaders about some other subjects.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector checked the single central record, reviewed safeguarding records and spoke to leaders, staff and pupils. Throughout the inspection, the inspector considered and continued to check the culture of safeguarding within the school.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including leaders' evaluation of the school, school improvement plans, the professional development plan for staff for this academic year, and the minutes of recent full governing body meetings.
- The inspector talked to pupils about their learning, what behaviour is like at the school and whether they felt safe at school.
- The inspector reviewed pupil, staff and parent surveys and was available on the gate to speak to parents and carers at the start of day two of the inspection.

Inspection team

Alice Roberts, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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