



**Office for Standards  
in Education**

**Inspection report**  
**St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School**

**Doncaster Education Authority**

Dates of inspection: 1 and 2 November 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

© Crown copyright 2004. This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Inspection reports are available on the Ofsted web site ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## **Contents**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>Basic information about the school</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Main findings</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Key issues</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Inspection findings</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Standards achieved by the pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The quality of education</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Implementation of the action plan</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Appendix – Information about the inspection</b>	<b>8</b>

## **Basic information about the school**

Name of school:	St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Mr N Collins
Address of school:	Roberts Road Balby Doncaster South Yorkshire DN4 0JN
Telephone:	01302 344678
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Mr F McDermott
Local education authority area:	Doncaster
Unique reference number:	106762
Name of reporting inspector:	Mr J Richardson HMI
Dates of inspection:	1 and 2 November 2004

## Introduction

1. St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School is situated in Balby, close to the centre of Doncaster. It is of average size, having 205 pupils on roll. Very few of the pupils have English as an additional language and none is at an early stage of learning English. Around 11 per cent of the pupils have designated special educational needs, including two who have a Statement of Special Educational Need. Just over 13 per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is average.

2. The school was inspected in July 2003. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of July 2003. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on two occasions to monitor the progress being made.

4. In November 2004, two HMI inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of July 2003.

## Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:

- the standards achieved in the 2004 Key Stage 1 national tests exceeded the school's targets and were above average overall. The standards achieved in last year's Key Stage 2 national tests were at least satisfactory overall. Standards in lessons were satisfactory overall but some of the pupils' writing was below the expectations for their ages;
  - most of the pupils make progress that is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. However, some of the higher-attaining pupils, particularly at Key Stage 1, underachieve because of low expectations. The quality of learning was at least satisfactory and it was good or better in three of the 14 lessons. Many of the pupils are developing good work habits but too few of the pupils work independently;
  - provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is a strength of the school. The school successfully translates Catholic teaching and practice into a framework which guides every area of its life;
  - the pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good and sometimes very good in lessons. Their behaviour around the school was good and was managed effectively by the staff;
-

- the rate of attendance, at 94.2 per cent last year, is average;
  - the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the school's inspection in July 2003. It was very good in one lesson, good in two and satisfactory in 11, including two where there were some weaknesses. Lessons are well planned, prepared and organised. Questioning is generally sharply focused and promotes learning. Relationships are positive and productive. The very good teaching was characterised by high expectations and a brisk pace. Where the teaching was less effective, tasks were not matched to the pupils' different abilities with enough accuracy;
  - the curriculum is carefully planned according to national guidance, with appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Thorough implementation of the national strategies has underpinned improvements, although there is still some way to go with writing. Provision for the pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the national Code of Practice. There is satisfactory provision in the Foundation Stage;
  - there are good systems for assessing the pupils' attainment in the core subjects, for tracking their progress and for setting targets for individual pupils and for the whole school. These measures are beginning to have a positive effect on the way teachers plan lessons;
  - the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher form an effective team that provides clear educational direction. However, there is no long-term strategic plan for the future development of the school. The headteacher plays a pivotal role in setting the very positive Catholic ethos of the school. He is very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, who provides considerable drive and energy and has made a valuable contribution to the school's progress;
  - most subject co-ordinators are developing an awareness of their role and the skills that are needed to carry it out effectively but there is still some way to go, particularly in clarifying the focus and sharpening the success criteria of action plans;
  - the governors are active in the school and fulfil their responsibility to oversee its performance. The chair of governors provides appropriate challenge to the school;
  - there are effective systems for monitoring the quality of teaching, scrutinising the pupils' work, analysing test data and checking the teachers' planning. Information from these and other activities has led to the identification of appropriate priorities but plans to address these are underdeveloped;
  - support from the local education authority (LEA) has improved and is satisfactory. Advice to the management and training, together with the work of the literacy and numeracy consultants, have contributed to improvements. However, the LEA has been slow to provide support for strategic planning.
-

## Key issues

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- continue to raise standards in all subjects, particularly in writing;
- improve the progress made by the higher-attaining pupils;
- continue to develop the role of the co-ordinators;
- strengthen strategic planning and associated action planning.

## Inspection findings

### Standards achieved by the pupils

7. The standards achieved in the 2004 Key Stage 1 national tests exceeded the school's targets and were above average overall. The standards achieved in last year's Key Stage 2 national tests were at least satisfactory. Standards in lessons were satisfactory overall but much of the pupils' writing was below the expectations for their ages.

8. The proportion of the pupils who achieved the expected Level 2 or above in the 2004 Key Stage 1 statutory tests was higher in reading and writing than in 2003. The proportion rose from 90 to 100 per cent in reading and from 93 to 96 per cent in writing. In mathematics, the proportion fell slightly from 97 to 92 per cent. In comparison with all schools nationally and schools where a similar proportion of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, the results for reading are very high, those for writing are well above average and those for mathematics are broadly average. The pupils exceeded their targets. However, in English and science, the proportion of the pupils gaining the higher Level 3 is in the lowest quarter of all schools nationally and of schools where a similar proportion of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. In mathematics, the proportion is in the lowest 40 per cent of all schools nationally and of schools where a similar proportion of the pupils are entitled to free school meals.

9. Compared to the results achieved in 2003, the proportion of the pupils who achieved the expected Level 4 or above in the 2004 Key Stage 2 statutory tests was similar in English and mathematics and higher in science. In English, the proportion fell slightly from 74 to 72 per cent and in mathematics from 80 to 79 per cent; in science, the proportion rose from 86 to 97 per cent. In comparison with all schools nationally and schools where a similar proportion of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, the results for English are below average, those for mathematics are average and those for science are well above average. The proportion of the pupils gaining the higher Level 5 is above the national average in all three subjects.

10. The pupils' attainment on entry to the Foundation Stage is below average in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical knowledge. Most make satisfactory progress overall. They count to 20 and often beyond and add and subtract single-digit numbers. The pupils develop confidence in speaking and display good listening skills.

---

They recognise familiar words and are beginning to read simple sentences. In the reception year they reach the levels expected for pupils of their age in all areas of learning.

11. In Key Stages 1 and 2, most of the pupils make progress that is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. However, some of the higher-attaining pupils, particularly at Key Stage 1, underachieve because of low expectations. The quality of learning was at least satisfactory and it was good or better in three of the 11 lessons. Many of the pupils are developing good work habits but too few of the pupils work independently.

12. Standards in English at the end of Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally overall. However, the standard of pupils' writing is less than satisfactory throughout the school. The teachers' expectations are too low, particularly with regard to the more able pupils, some of whom are underachieving. Insufficient opportunities are provided for many of the pupils to write in a variety of genres and also to apply their writing skills in different areas of the curriculum. Many of the pupils display sound spelling and punctuation skills but some are prone to making basic errors. The quality of presentation is inconsistent across the school and is often unsatisfactory. Too many pupils in Key Stage 2 are still printing as opposed to joining letters.

13. Throughout the school the pupils' speaking and listening skills are at least average and often good. This is enhanced by the conscious development of vocabulary and the use of effective questioning by the teachers during lessons. As a result, the pupils are required to listen carefully, reflect and articulate their responses to the rest of the class.

14. Standards in reading vary, but overall are in line with national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6. Younger pupils recognise familiar words in simple texts and use a range of skills to decode words and gain an understanding of what they are reading. In Year 6, a significant number of pupils read with a good level of fluency and accuracy. They read independently and discuss the main points of a passage with confidence. Pupils are less secure when reading non-fiction material, where their understanding of the vocabulary is limited.

15. Standards in mathematics in Year 2 are broadly in line with national expectations overall. Most of the pupils count forwards and backwards in ones or tens from any two-digit number and measure lines to the nearest centimetre. They find coins that total to 50p and many add and subtract 9 or 11 by adding or subtracting 10 and adjusting by 1. There is a similar picture in Year 6, where most of the pupils interpret data represented in line graphs and some correctly relate the gradient of the line to speed in distance-time graphs. They solve problems by working systematically and explain their reasoning; for example when solving problems involving permutations of seating. The higher-attaining pupils use an appropriate range of strategies for accurate mental multiplication and division.

### **The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

16. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school successfully translates Catholic teaching and practice into a framework which guides every area of its life. Policies and systems refer to Christian teaching in seeking to value and support each individual in the school. Daily worship and prayers encourage the pupils to reflect on how they treat each other and on their responsibility to others. The positive relationships between the staff and many of the pupils make an important contribution to building a Christian ethos which promotes the pupils' self-esteem and consideration of others.

---



17. Elections to the school council have been used well to develop the pupils' understanding of democratic elections and the purpose of manifestos. A range of external speakers, including one who talked about asylum seekers, and work with a charity have broadened the pupils' awareness of other cultures and the world around them. Most classes visit museums and other places as part of the curriculum and some of the pupils wrote and performed a puppet play at the Doncaster arts festival. The choir has sung in some of the local residential care homes for the elderly, and parents and parishioners were invited to the recent harvest festival assembly. Displays, both in classrooms and the general areas, celebrate the school's Catholic life and values. Overall, the learning environment promotes high aspirations and makes a positive contribution to the school's ethos and, on occasions, is used effectively as a resource for learning.

18. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good and sometimes very good in lessons. They were aware of and followed the teachers' expectations, understood classroom routines and behaved well. They were keen to participate, and often those working on unsupervised tasks sustained concentration for significant periods of time. In many classes, transitions from one activity to another were accompanied quickly and without fuss. The pupils' behaviour around the school was good and was managed effectively by the staff. They responded well to the Catholic ethos of the school and were polite and courteous to visitors.

19. The rate of attendance, at 94.2 per cent last year, is average.

### **The quality of education**

20. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the school's inspection in July 2003. It was very good in one lesson, good in two and satisfactory in 11, including two where there were some weaknesses.

21. Most lessons are planned and structured well, with clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils and revisited in concluding plenary sessions. Teachers are well prepared with a range of resources that are used effectively to interest and motivate the pupils. Interactive whiteboards are used successfully in many cases to engage all of the pupils in lessons. Questioning is clearly focused on learning and provides opportunities for pupils to develop and extend their thinking, as well as allowing the teacher to assess pupils' progress and rectify misconceptions. A climate of praise and reward underpins high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and effective classroom management. Additional adults are well directed and support learning effectively.

22. The best lessons also involve teachers: having high expectations and continually harrying and cajoling the pupils to do their best; matching work accurately to the pupils' different abilities; providing a range of activities that are conducted at a brisk pace; and involving the pupils in assessing their own learning.

23. Where the teaching is less effective, tasks are not matched to the pupils' different abilities with enough accuracy and the pupils are expected to complete too little work in the time.

24. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory. Planning is detailed, and reflects the national guidance for the Foundation Stage. It is adjusted in the light of assessment in order to meet the pupils' learning needs. The day-to-day management of the unit is good, and staff work hard to provide an environment that is informative and

---

stimulating. The deployment of the nursery support staff is appropriate and they work well with teachers to support learning.

25. Provision for the pupils who have special educational needs is satisfactory and meets the requirements of the national Code of Practice. Individual education plans for these pupils include realistic targets that are reviewed twice each year. The co-ordinator's priorities for improvement appropriately include making these targets more precise. Classroom assistants give sound and sometimes good support to these pupils in class.

26. The curriculum is carefully planned according to national guidance, with appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Thorough implementation of the national strategies has underpinned improvements, although there is still some way to go with writing. The school is sensibly planning to provide further guidance on the progression in skills across the curriculum.

27. There are good systems for assessing the pupils' attainment in the core subjects, for tracking their progress and for setting targets for individual pupils and for the whole school. These measures are beginning to have a positive effect on the way teachers plan lessons.

### **Leadership and management**

28. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher form an effective team that provides clear educational direction. However, there is no long-term strategic plan for the future development of the school. The headteacher plays a pivotal role in setting the very positive Catholic ethos of the school. He has steered the school through a period of considerable changes to staffing, and has begun to establish a professional dialogue about teaching and learning that is underpinned by an appropriate balance of challenge and support. He has ensured that the school closely followed the agenda set out in the action plan.

29. The headteacher is ably supported by the deputy headteacher, who provides considerable drive and energy and has made a valuable contribution to the school's progress. She provides a role model of good teaching and has led improvements to the school's system for assessing the pupils' attainment and tracking their progress. She has played a key role in raising the expectations of the teachers.

30. Most subject co-ordinators are developing an awareness of their role and the skills that are needed to carry it out effectively but there is still some way to go. There is a well-considered programme of support and detailed guidance. Action plans have been improved by recent revisions but they sometimes lack a sharp focus and clear success criteria.

31. Four new teachers, including the deputy headteacher, have been appointed since the inspection of July 2003. Staff in their different capacities have worked hard to improve the school. Teamwork is evident in the consistency of approach from class to class. The newly qualified teachers have improved in confidence and practice.

32. The governors are active in the school and fulfil their responsibility to oversee its performance. The chair of governors provides the necessary challenge to the school. There is an appropriate schedule of activities and there has been some training.

---

33. There are effective systems for monitoring the quality of teaching, scrutinising the pupils' work, analysing test data and checking the teachers' planning. Information from these and other activities has led to the identification of appropriate priorities but plans to address these are underdeveloped.

34. Support from the LEA has improved and is satisfactory. Advice to the management and training, together with the work of the literacy and numeracy consultants, have contributed to improvements. The LEA also underwrote financial support for management advice for 20 days from the headteacher of a local Catholic school at the request of the diocese. The LEA has provided a very useful financial analysis pack that enables governors to compare the budget with that of similar schools. However, the LEA has been slow to provide support for strategic planning.

### **Implementation of the action plan**

35. The inspection report of July 2003 required the school to address five key issues. These principally related to: improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum; improving the pupils' attainment in design and technology in Key Stage 1; improving the quality of leadership and management; developing systems for monitoring the quality of teaching; and improving the use of assessment information. Overall, good progress has been made and most tasks have been completed.

36. Changes to staffing and the system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, accompanied by appropriate training have contributed to significant improvements in the quality of teaching. The school has reviewed the curriculum and it now meets statutory requirements.

37. Improvements to provision for design and technology and history in Years 1 and 2 have led to a rise in standards, which are now satisfactory.

38. Changes to staffing and the establishment of appropriate management systems and procedures have resulted in clear direction for the school, raised expectations and arrangements for ensuring policies are implemented consistently.

39. The school has developed a comprehensive system for monitoring the quality of teaching. It includes an appropriate balance of advice and challenge to teachers, and has contributed to improvements.

40. The deputy headteacher has worked hard to develop the good system for assessing the pupils' progress and evaluating the impact of intervention programmes.

## **Appendix – Information about the inspection**

The school was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in July 2003. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in January and May 2004 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of July 2003.

In November 2004, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Fourteen lessons or parts of lessons and two registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunchtimes and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, the chair of governors and a representative of the LEA, and informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of July 2003 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.