



St Francis Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109239
LEA North Somerset
Inspection number 278160
Inspection dates 15 September 2005 to 16 September 2005
Reporting inspector Graeme Bassett RISP

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Station Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Nailsea
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Bristol BS48 4PD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01275 855373
Number on roll	203	Fax number	01275 794476
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr P Wildsmith
Date of previous inspection	8 January 2001	Headteacher	Mr Paul Stathers

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 15 September 2005 - 16 September 2005	Inspection number 278160
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by Mr G Bassett.

Description of the school

St Francis Catholic Primary School, for children aged 4 to 11 years, is smaller than other schools with 206 pupils on roll. It serves a wide area around Nailsea and Clevedon because it is a Catholic school. Most of the children are white British. The local area is more advantaged than most nationally and the children enter the Reception class with broadly average attainment overall but there are some who are below average for their age. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs than in most schools, although the proportion with statements is about average. There is a growing number of children who do not have English as their first language. Recently, as a mark of its success, the school gained an award as a 'Healthy School', a 'Quality Standards' (NAACE) award for information and communication technology (ICT) and had its 'Investor in People' award renewed.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of St Francis Catholic Primary School is good. It provides a good standard of education. There is a caring Christian ethos and parents and pupils are very positive about the supportive family atmosphere that is fostered.

The children in the reception class achieve well because of the good provision made for them from the time they start school. Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average and the pupils are achieving well. The school has been successful in maintaining good achievement in Years 1 and 2 since the last inspection. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been significantly higher than the national average in recent years and achievement has been good. However, the national test results for 2005 show that standards fell in mathematics and that some of the higher attaining pupils did not reach the predicted higher levels in English and science. It is clear that these results were unusual and that there was disruption to their learning as a result of staffing difficulties. This situation has been resolved well and standards in the current Year 6 are again well above average and the pupils are achieving well.

The pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of careful planning for their needs and the effective support they receive from teachers and class assistants.

The few pupils who do not have English as their first language achieve well once they have settled into the school.

The system to assess and track pupils' progress is good. However, the school does not give pupils enough opportunities to assess their own work so that they understand what they need to do next.

The curriculum is good and the school is successfully linking subjects to help pupils in their learning. Out-of-school activities are good and are popular amongst the pupils. The provision for pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Attendance is good. The excellent behaviour of the pupils stands out as one of the school's main strengths. Pupils have a good understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle and how to keep safe. The school has outstanding links with parents and this helps the pupils achieve well. The leadership, management and governance of the school are good. The school uses self-evaluation well and has sensible objectives for the future. However, in the past the school was not always quick enough to respond to emerging weaknesses. This was because of shortcomings in communication between subject leaders and the headteacher.

The issues raised at the last inspection have been dealt with effectively and the school has proven good capacity for improvement. The school gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Focus on:
- Giving pupils more opportunities to self-assess their own work, so that they know the next steps in their learning

- Finding effective procedures to ensure that key information gathered by subject leaders is communicated effectively to the headteacher for action.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children joining the reception class settle well to school routines and this ensures that their achievement is good, particularly in their personal development. Pupils start Year 1 with broadly average standards and they continue to make good progress. Standards are currently above average in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics and these pupils are achieving well. In the 2005 national tests every pupil reached the expected level in writing and mathematics and very nearly all did the same in reading. Many pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in these subjects. The school has held standards in Year 2 at an above, and sometimes well above, average level since it was last inspected.

For most years recently, standards at the end of Year 6 have been significantly higher than the national average. The pupils have usually made good progress from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6. However, in 2005 the pupils' performance in the national tests fell significantly in mathematics and did not meet the school's target. Additionally, although nearly every pupil reached the level expected for their age, fewer pupils than the school predicted reached the higher levels in English and science. Currently, the standards in Year 6 are above average and the pupils are achieving well in the development of their basics skills and being aware of their well-being.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' behaviour in classes and at playtimes is excellent and their attendance is good. They are happy in school and willingly work hard in lessons. Pupils use up a lot of energy during playtimes as they play together harmoniously. They show full respect for each other. The parents' view that 'behaviour is exceptional' is well founded.

In lessons, the pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and are keen to answer questions and take part in discussions. They are polite to adults and other pupils. Pupils are given responsibilities at lunch times which they carry out with commitment. Older pupils look after the younger ones through the 'Buddy' system. The school has a strong sense of community and is successfully developing the pupils' social skills. The pupils and parents are rightly proud of their school and all work hard to ensure that it is a pleasant and stimulating place to learn.

Pupils are confident to discuss their ideas and opinions. The school council builds on these skills very successfully and, as a result, the pupils feel that their opinions are valued. They are particularly pleased when their suggestions have been adopted. The pupils' social skills are good and they have a very strong sense of right and wrong. Spiritual development is good and the pupils participate fully in school assemblies through performing and singing. For example, in an assembly during the inspection, some pupils read aloud superbly a high quality poem "Winter" which they had written and others performed choral speaking with precision and enthusiasm. Pupils'

multicultural awareness is good and developed appropriately, which is an improvement since the previous inspection.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school has re-established the effective teaching in Year 6 that clearly led to the above average standards and good achievement in the past. Now, teaching in lessons is generally stimulating, pupils respond well and learning is brisk. Throughout the school the level of challenge is good, with activities that develop the pupils' skills and knowledge systematically and hold their interest well. The teachers provide appropriately for the full range of pupils' needs. Those needing extra help are taught well, usually with the effective support of classroom assistants. The teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan their lessons well to raise standards. The good quality of teaching ensures that the pupils achieve well and that their behaviour is outstanding. The teachers know the pupils very well and keep comprehensive and accurate records to show what each one has achieved. These are used well to build upon the pupils' previous learning. However, the school does not do enough to enable the pupils to self-assess their work in order that they understand what they can do and what they need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a well balanced curriculum which meets the needs of the pupils effectively. The good quality displays around the school celebrate pupils' work in all subjects. Displays of artwork are particularly good.

The work is adapted well to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs. The pupils who do not speak English as their first language make good progress and parents are very pleased with what the school provides. The school does not have specialist expertise to help pupils who have little or no English when they start school. However, it is successful in helping these pupils settle to their learning and to make good progress.

The school has made good links between different subjects and pupils use their literacy and numeracy knowledge successfully in subjects such as science. This contributes well to the development of skills required for life and employment outside school. ICT is used well in other subjects and has a good impact upon the quality of teaching and learning through the effective use of interactive whiteboards.

There is a comprehensive programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils in Year 6 have already established good links with their next school and they say they are well prepared for the future. The school provides a safe and secure environment in which all pupils can flourish. As a result, the pupils are confident, willing to take on responsibility and forthright in their views. The pupils speak highly of the good

opportunities to take part in activities during lunchtime and after school. The initiative by the school to create activities on the school website for use at home is particularly rewarding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and welfare of pupils are very good, and health and safety are promoted strongly. Child protection arrangements are robust and regularly reviewed. The school promotes the pupils' personal development very effectively through its Catholic traditions, and throughout the curriculum and the trusting relationships pupils develop with all staff. As a result, the pupils are confident and happy at school. The school has excellent links with parents and these have a very beneficial impact upon the positive attitudes of the pupils and their achievements.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, supported well by the deputy headteacher, has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Their positive approaches to school management are central to school development. The headteacher has ensured that the school has dealt effectively with the issues raised at the last inspection and there is proven capacity for improvement in the future. With the active involvement of the whole staff and the governing body, the headteacher carries out an effective whole school self-evaluation and from this a clear direction for the future course of school development is established. Progress towards completion of the school goals is monitored regularly.

The headteacher has developed good strategies to include subject leaders in school self-evaluation. They monitor their subjects effectively and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of standards, achievement and pupils' personal development accurately. However, the school does not always act promptly enough when weaknesses are identified because there are no agreed procedures for communicating information gathered by the subject leaders to the headteacher. For example, the decline in achievement last year, which was caused by the staffing difficulties in Year 6, was not remedied quickly enough. The school has learned from this experience and quickly sorted a similar problem that occurred in the Foundation Stage.

The governing body are knowledgeable about the school's strengths and weaknesses. They visit the school regularly and have good links with subject co-ordinators. Governors meet all the statutory requirements effectively and make frequent checks to ensure all pupils are well protected and safe. The school has a satisfactory number of knowledgeable and experienced staff. Staff and governors foster a caring environment, ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to achieve as well as they can. This is central to the school's vision as a Catholic school.

The school gives good value for money.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

St Francis Catholic Primary School Station Road Nailsea North Somerset BS48 4PD

16th September 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. The inspectors had an enjoyable time with you, looking at your work and visiting you in your lessons. We enjoyed chatting with many of you during lunch times and in small groups. Thank you for telling us all about your school.

What we liked most about St Francis Catholic Primary School:

Your behaviour is excellent and you care well for each other

Your teachers teach well and make your learning interesting

You show that you are enjoying school and your attendance is good

The work you do is good and you try hard to do your best

Your headteacher leads the school well.

What we have asked your headteacher and staff to do:

Help you to record what you have learned and to enable you to list what you need to do next

Improve the way that information is passed from your teachers to your headteacher so that improvements to school are made more quickly. We hope that you can help your headteacher and teachers by telling them what you find easy and what is hard.

Graeme Bassett

Lead inspector