



St Francis Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123172
LEA Oxfordshire LEA
Inspection number 281420
Inspection dates 21 March 2006 to 22 March 2006
Reporting inspector Charalambos Loizou AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Horspath Road
School category	Voluntary controlled		Cowley
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Oxford OX4 2QT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01865 468190
Number on roll	289	Fax number	01865 468194
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Ejaz Khan
Date of previous inspection	27 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Janice Gordon

Age group 3 to 11	Inspection dates 21 March 2006 - 22 March 2006	Inspection number 281420
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Francis is an average sized primary school and nursery serving an area of social and economic deprivation. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. Most pupils are of white British heritage although a significant number of pupils are from a diversity of ethnic backgrounds; the largest group is of Pakistani heritage. A small number of pupils are in the early stages of learning English. A significant proportion of pupils are from the families of asylum-seekers or refugees. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is similar to most schools although the number with a statement of special educational need is much higher than most schools. Attainment when pupils first join the school is low. The large majority of pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In nearly all respects inspectors agree with the school's view of itself. The school provides a good education, good value for money and pupils achieve well overall. Pupils enjoy school, behave well and have good attitudes to school and learning. Their care, welfare and support are good.

There is good provision in the Foundation Stage. Children start school with low language, communication and personal skills. They make good progress in the nursery because provision is very good although standards are below those expected by the time they start Year 1. However, older reception children are taught alongside Year 1 pupils where the curriculum is not always matched to their needs.

The teaching is good and is having a positive effect on the pupils' personal development and achievements. Pupils reach the standards expected for their age by Year 6. Standards are well below average by Year 2 and are improving but could be higher. Consequently, progress overall is good and is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Although assessment is satisfactory, managers are not making best use of the information gathered to identify the specific needs of different groups of pupils to ensure they all make enough progress, particularly by Year 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and those with special educational needs do well throughout the school.

Good leadership and management ensure that the school knows its strengths and what needs to be improved further. The school has a good capacity to keep on improving, having successfully dealt with the areas for improvement identified at its last inspection. Governors are effective and work in close partnership with parents, who think highly of this popular school.

What the school should do to improve further

- * Accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards in Years 1 and 2.
- * Complete improvements to assessment so that managers analyse pupils' performance more effectively to maximise their progress.
- * Ensure that provision for the oldest reception children matches the good provision made for reception aged children in the nursery.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils start school with low language, communication, personal and social skills. The school modestly graded achievement as satisfactory when, in fact, the pupils achieve well, in relation to their starting points, to reach average standards by Year 6. Pupils make very good progress in the nursery and in Years 5 and 6 where provision is strongest. The school sets reasonably challenging targets and meets them in the main.

In the Foundation Stage, both nursery and reception age children based in the nursery do well in all areas of learning because there is a stimulating range of activities. The progress of older reception children who join Year 1 during the year slows, and is only satisfactory, because their learning needs are not always being met.

In 2005, Year 6 pupils did well in the English tests and had made good progress since Year 2. Their progress in mathematics and science from Year 2 was broadly average. Although mathematics standards were lower than previous years they have recovered well this year and are in line with those expected. Tests show that standards by Year 2 are low but achievement is satisfactory in relation to the pupils' starting points.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities achieve well throughout the school because their progress is monitored closely and effectively. Pupils in the early stages of learning English do well as do pupils from asylum or refugee families because they are well supported.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is a good feature of the school. Pupils are confident, mature and polite. Relationships are very positive. Pupils enjoy learning and happily engage in conversation with others. They show good attitudes and behaviour and support one another in maintaining good friendships. Attendance is satisfactory, despite being adversely affected by a few families who choose to take extended holidays during term time. Older pupils care for younger ones so gain a good understanding of personal and collective responsibilities.

The school council enables the pupils to learn a good range of enterprise skills, for example when organising charities or lobbying local councillors to improve the physical environment of the school. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and make useful suggestions, for example, to display dinner menus clearly for other pupils. They show maturity when they discuss and reflect on spiritual and moral issues raised in assemblies and lessons. Pupils are thoughtful and considerate to others. They show a good appreciation and understanding of each other's cultural heritages.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good and this has a positive impact on the pupils' achievement and personal development. The strongest teaching is in the nursery and Years 5 and 6 where pupils' progress is most brisk. Across the school, teachers work together well in teams to ensure a similar approach in classes containing pupils of similar age. Pupils at the early stages of learning English are well taught and they make good progress. More able pupils are usually provided with the harder work they need, while the teaching of pupils with learning difficulties is good and they, too, achieve

well. Pupils appreciate the help they are given, one commenting that 'teachers are patient and explain things.'

A close check is kept on the progress of children in the nursery and the information gathered is used well to ensure that they, including the youngest of reception age, achieve well. Improved assessment procedures in older classes are beginning to provide clearer information about pupils' progress, although this is not yet sufficiently well established to monitor specific groups. Teachers' expectations are particularly high in Years 5 and 6. Marking is most effective in these classes, as the pupils are given a clear indication of how well they are doing and, as one pupil put it, 'we know what to do next time.' Appropriate targets are set in Years 1 and 2, but the pupils are not always sufficiently aware of them, which slows their progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of pupils of different ages, backgrounds and abilities. The challenge of mixed-age classes is met successfully by a two-year cycle of planning that ensures that the work becomes progressively more demanding from year to year. Good planning in the Foundation Stage provides a stimulating curriculum and a good emphasis on practical activities. This has a positive impact on the children's learning. However, the oldest children in reception do not always have sufficiently regular access to all of the required areas of learning. Although they make satisfactory progress, this could be better.

Across the school, good links are made between subjects to make the learning relevant and enhance the pupils' enjoyment. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoyed using the internet to research the Victorians. The pupils' learning is enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and clubs. Good planning for literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) ensures that most pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care and support for its pupils. Member of staff are committed to the needs of the pupils. This is evident in the way in which new pupils to the school are supported and in the programmes for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities as well as those in the early stages of learning English. The school is a happy and secure place and parents appreciate the fact that their children are safe and well cared for. Pupils have regard for their own and others' safety in lessons and at playtimes and are well supervised.

Child protection procedures are securely in place. Health and safety routines and risk assessments are carried out systematically. The school checks the progress of individual pupils although assessment information is not always being used to identify groups of pupils to analyse their progress over time.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and governors know the school well. This is reflected in their accurate self-evaluation and good improvements since the last inspection. There is good teamwork and subject leaders are developing their monitoring skills to raise standards further. Analysis of the pupils' performance is satisfactory but is not sharp enough to identify trends over time, especially for pupils in Years 1 and 2. The school's track record in maintaining and improving standards and its capacity to continue this are good.

The management of provision for pupils with learning difficulties and those with special educational needs is good. This means they achieve well and are well cared for. Similarly, the management and provision for those in the early stages of learning English are effective, enabling these pupils, and those from asylum or refugee families, to settle quickly into school and make good progress.

Governors carry out their roles and responsibilities well. They have effective systems to monitor the school's performance and ensure good value for money. Parents hold the school in high regard and both staff and governors provide good opportunities to listen to the views of parents and pupils.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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	3	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	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	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

Pupils

The inspectors enjoyed visiting your school. I am writing this letter to you to explain what we found out. We were pleased to see how well behaved and polite you all are. Many of you told us that you enjoy coming to school because you like making friends, have lots of fun things to do and enjoy learning.

We believe that your school provides a good education. We saw that all your teachers are good at helping you to understand things better so that, by the time you get to Year 6, most of you reach your targets. The school council have come up with some good ideas to improve your school and many of you told us that you like the way teachers and other adults are always there to help you. The staff and governors manage your school well and make sure you are safe and well cared for. You have good opportunities to take part in special activities and events as well as some exciting visits to special places.

There are three main things we would like the school to do to improve further: * We would like the school to make sure that more pupils in Years 1 and 2 reach higher standards. * We would like your teachers to keep a closer check on how well you are doing to make sure that all of you reach your targets. * All the children in the nursery do well and during each school year the older reception age children leave the nursery to join Year 1 pupils. We would like your teachers to make sure that the reception children who join their new class have the same exciting things to do as in the nursery, as well as doing harder work. Thank you for making us welcome. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Charalambos Loizou

Lead Inspector