



St Francis RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 100826
Local Authority Southwark
Inspection number 285894
Inspection dates 1–2 February 2007
Reporting inspector Marianne Harris

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Friary Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Peckham
Age range of pupils	3–11		London SE15 1RQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	02076390187
Number on roll (school)	412	Fax number	02076390342
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr George Gabbett
		Headteacher	Mrs C Molloy/Mrs R Atkinson (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3–11	1–2 February 2007	285894

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger-than-average school in a socially deprived and culturally mixed area of inner London. Most of the pupils come from a Black African heritage and all pupils are Catholic. A small proportion of pupils are at an early stage of learning English. There is a high number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including a very high number who have a statement of special need. The school is currently being led by two job-sharing acting head-teachers who have been in post a little over a year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with good features. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and many comment on the dedication and commitment of the staff.

Pupils' personal development is fostered well so that they are keen to come to school and enjoy learning. The acting head-teachers have been most successful in promoting a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle. All pupils feel part of the school community and appreciate the strong Catholic ethos that helps create a calm school. This sense of belonging contributes significantly to pupils' self-confidence as they learn to work together with mutual respect.

When they join the school children's attainment is below that normally expected for their age. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and children make steady progress. By the end of Year 2 standards remain below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The national test data for 2006 shows that pupils at the end of Year 6 reached standards that were broadly average in English and mathematics and below average in science. These results were a significant improvement on the previous year, although the number reaching the higher levels in all three subjects was lower than is normally seen. This represents satisfactory achievement for all pupils. The schools own data shows that the targets set for next year are challenging but achievable, indicating that the rise in standards can be sustained.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although the quality of teaching is variable across the school. Staff have good relationships with the pupils. There are high expectations of good behaviour and pupils respond well to this. The care, guidance and support given to pupils are good, with new assessment systems effectively tracking the progress each pupil is making. However, pupils who are learning English as an additional language are not always assessed correctly, so that their stage of fluency is underestimated. This results in support not always being appropriate. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with a statement of need, are well supported, so that they can achieve as well as they are able. The curriculum is satisfactory with many opportunities for pupils to visit the local area and begin to understand about the community outside of their school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The two acting head-teachers have been very successful in creating team-work within the school. The roles of the leadership team have been strengthened. The systematic process of monitoring teaching and learning is new to the school. However, it is not rigorous enough to clearly identify the areas that need improving so that all pupils achieve well. There has been much recent improvement that demonstrates the capacity to improve further is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Monitor teaching and learning rigorously to ensure that all pupils can achieve well.
- Ensure that pupils who are learning English as an additional language are assessed correctly so that they can receive appropriate support for their level of fluency.

- Raise standards in science so that pupils achieve as well in this subject as they do in English and mathematics.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From a low starting point, pupils achieve satisfactorily. By the end of the Foundation Stage pupils have made reasonable progress, especially in their personal, social and emotional development, although standards are below average by the time they enter Year 1. Teacher assessments for pupils at the end of Year 2 show that standards remain below average, although pupils have made steady progress. Standards in national tests in Year 6 rose significantly between 2005 and 2006, especially in English and mathematics, and are now average. Setting in Years 5 and 6 has been successful in raising standards. Standards in science are below average, but are rising because the school has introduced many more scientific investigations in order to raise standards. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress because work is planned to meet their needs. Pupils whose first language is not English make reasonable progress, although their stage of fluency is sometimes underestimated and some are capable of reaching higher standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils are friendly, polite and well behaved. In this diverse school community the richness of different cultures is respected and celebrated. Pupils perform concerts to raise money for charities and also to provide materials and equipment to help children in a school in Ghana. Pupils make a strong contribution to their own school, for example, through the school council and peer mediators. Older pupils enjoy supporting younger children, as well as counselling and guiding their peers when there are difficulties. Attendance is good and there have been no exclusions in the recent past. Pupils arrive at school in a very positive and friendly manner. They are courteous and considerate towards others as they move around the school. They have good understanding of healthy eating and how to stay safe, and willingly participate in exercise. If they do have any problems they know to whom they can turn for support and advice. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they acquire the basic skills they will need in later life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall but there is a range in quality. In all lessons, relationships are good and there are consistently high expectations for the

behaviour of the pupils. As a result, classroom management is generally strong so that pupils are well motivated and willing to work hard. Assessment data is now used well in English and mathematics to identify where pupils are having difficulty and to plan appropriate work. Teaching and learning support assistants are well-deployed to support individuals and groups of pupils. Planning for lessons caters for pupils of differing attainment but in some lessons the range of tasks provided does not provide enough challenge for some pupils. Sometimes, too many worksheets are used and this limits the opportunities more able pupils have to write for themselves. Teachers have set appropriate targets for pupils in English and mathematics, but marking does not always tell pupils how they can improve their work in order to reach higher standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, based on national requirements. There have been recent improvements to information and communication technology (ICT), and interactive whiteboards are being used well in most lessons. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The teaching of French in Years 3 - 6 enhances the curriculum, and pupils speak enthusiastically about the out-of-school clubs that are available. Many opportunities are taken to visit local museums and broaden the pupils' knowledge of the local area. The programme for personal, social and health education is well established in the school and pupils have a good understanding about keeping healthy and safe. The school has begun work to link subjects together more effectively so that learning is more fun and pupils can reach higher standards.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care guidance and support of pupils are good. There are good relationships between all pupils and staff. All staff are very careful to ensure that the school provides a safe and secure environment. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have their needs accurately assessed. These needs are regularly reviewed so that changes can be made if necessary. Pupils for whom English is an additional language receive satisfactory support but their language skills are not always accurately assessed and support is not always appropriate. The school's procedures for child protection and health and safety are thorough, and all staff are trained appropriately. Pupils review their targets with teachers so that they know what it is they are aiming for, and, in many lessons, pupils assess for themselves how well they think they are learning. This makes a significant contribution to their personal development and gives them confidence to ask for help and support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting head-teachers are effective leaders who are providing a clear vision for the development of the school. There is a

good sense of community and close attention to ensuring that pupils are well cared for. This has contributed well to the personal development of the pupils. The school has carried out an accurate analysis of its own strengths and weaknesses and put in many strategies to improve provision. Since September 2006, the monitoring of pupils' achievement has been significantly strengthened in English and mathematics. This has resulted in the identification of pupils who may not be achieving as well as they might and additional support is organised for them. Monitoring the quality of the teaching is systematically undertaken but the majority of observations do not clearly identify specific areas that need to be developed in order to produce a consistently high standard of teaching across the school. Consequently, the quality of teaching varies too much. Governors support the school well through their work in committees and visits to their linked areas in the school. However, they are insufficiently involved in evaluating the progress the pupils are making and the standards they are achieving to hold the school to account for the standards it achieves.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for welcoming us into your school a few days ago. You were very helpful in telling us all about your work. We are now writing to let you know what we found out.

We think that yours is a satisfactory school that has some good parts. We were most impressed with the way you all get along together and how much you help each other. You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe, and know which foods are good for you. We think you all behave well, are friendly and polite. You told us that you enjoy school and we think that you all make satisfactory progress. We know that your teachers all take good care of you. We think the school could provide better support and guidance for some of you who are learning English as an additional language. We have asked your acting head-teachers to check up on this and make sure that you are all being well taught, so that if you work hard you learn as much as you can. In the tests in Year 6, you now do as well in English and mathematics as children in most schools. Your science results are not as good and we have asked your teachers to help you more in science so that you can reach higher standards. You can help your teachers by continuing to listen to them and sharing your ideas.

Once again, thank you very much for welcoming us into your school. We wish you all good luck in the future.

Marianne Harris

Lead inspector