

Franciscan Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101008
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	285939
Inspection date	15 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrusell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	471
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roger Stephenson
Headteacher	Mrs Clare McDonnell
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2001
School address	221 Franciscan Road Tooting London SW17 8HQ
Telephone number	020 8672 3048
Fax number	020 8672 9452

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues, achievement and standards, teaching and learning, care, guidance and support, and leadership and management, gathering evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with parents, children, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Franciscan Primary is a much larger than average sized school. It serves an area of very high social deprivation and considerable ethnic and cultural diversity. A high of proportion pupils have a home language other than English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is very high. The school houses a unit for pupils with emotional and behavioural needs. More pupils than would normally be expected join or leave the school beyond the starting year. Many of these are refugees or asylum seekers. A very high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The school has a Gold Artsmark award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Franciscan Primary is a good school with a number of outstanding features. The committed and enthusiastic leadership of the headteacher, well supported by the senior management team and governing body, ensures pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. These are promoted by an excellent curriculum that takes the fullest account of pupils' backgrounds and personal needs. Outstanding links with parents, the community, other schools and agencies contribute to the very high level of care and ensure pupils' health and safety. One parent commented, 'I wouldn't use any other school but Franciscan'.

Pupils greatly enjoy all aspects of school life, shown in their eagerness to attend school and the good progress they make. The school works hard to improve attendance and unauthorised absence is below average. Pupils especially value the friendships they make, demonstrated by a tremendous sense of harmony throughout the school between pupils of all cultural backgrounds. Outstanding spiritual and cultural development is evident from the displays around the school. Memorable performances of the gospel choir and Indian dance group were observed during the inspection. Pupils' self-confidence and esteem are developed extremely well through such opportunities, especially when shared with the local community. Other clubs, such as French, Shakespeare and art and craft, along with a good range of educational visits, further enrich the curriculum. Very good opportunities for sport, drawing on coaching links with local schools, encourage pupils to be fit. They have a very good understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet. One pupil commented that she told her mum what food to buy. Pupils are extremely polite and well-behaved, knowing that if they have any concerns, 'Adults will always listen to us and do something about it'. The school council values its contribution to improvements, such as the refurbishment of the playground. The school makes very good provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, and for those who are new to speaking English, enabling them to make similar progress to others. Younger children especially, and their parents, benefit from teaching assistants who communicate in the many different home languages represented in the school. Some older, vulnerable pupils benefit from the learning support unit based in the school, greatly appreciating the support given to them.

Throughout the school, pupils achieve well. When children join the school in the Nursery, their attainment is well below the expected level for their age. It is extremely low in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. A significant number have little or no spoken English. They make good progress and, at the end of Reception, the majority are working within the goals expected of them. Additional children, frequently with little experience of school and spoken English, join during the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. This significantly reduces the overall level of attainment at the end of this key stage. Pupils nevertheless continue to make good progress throughout Years 1 and 2, although standards at the end of Year 2 are extremely low in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has introduced a systematic way of teaching phonics, which is starting to improve reading skills. Throughout Years 3, 4 and 5, pupils, including a significant proportion that join throughout Key Stage 2, continue to make good progress. This progress accelerates considerably in Year 6 through well-targeted additional support for literacy and numeracy and well-supported homework and Saturday clubs, where learning is consolidated. Consequently, standards have been rising in recent years. At the end of Year 6, they are above average in English, mathematics and science, showing that pupils are exceeding the challenging targets set for them. These academic skills, along with outstanding personal qualities, prepare pupils extremely well for their future life and learning.

This good achievement results from good teaching. Teachers have very good relationships with their classes so that pupils are very keen to learn. Lessons are well prepared and little time is wasted. Information and communication technology is used well to support and enliven teaching and learning. Good use is generally made of teaching assistants. Occasionally they tend just to supervise what pupils are doing rather than being more fully involved in their learning, for example by questioning and discussing the work with pupils. The school is now monitoring the progress made by pupils throughout the school more systematically. Regular assessments are recorded. Teachers check whether pupils are making the expected progress towards their challenging end-of-year targets, and provide further support where required. An analysis of test results and assessments is helping the school to identify more clearly the different ability groups within classes, and those areas in subjects that would benefit from more attention. Teachers are not always using assessment information well enough to plan more precisely what pupils need to learn next, and the styles of learning best suited to them. The impact of this is to slow pupils' progress. This was apparent in a mathematics lesson where some pupils were being taught to tell the time at a level that was too difficult for them. Short-term improvement targets are set for older pupils. They value the guidance given by these targets and are keen to achieve them.

In its self-evaluation, the school has not always provided sufficient evidence to validate its outstanding judgements on all aspects. Nevertheless, improvements since the last inspection and the appropriateness of its current actions, the rising standards by Year 6 and the closer checks now being made on progress, show that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are well provided for in the Foundation Stage. Considerable emphasis is given to pupils' language acquisition and personal development. A very caring environment supports children in their learning. Very friendly links with parents and their confidence in the school mean that children quickly settle into school and its routines. The provision has recently improved following the support and advice of an early years' consultant and the appointment of a new Foundation Stage leader. Planning now shows a good balance between activities directed by staff and times for children to explore and discover for themselves. It further identifies points for observation and assessment, so that an ongoing check is made and recorded of children's progress in the different areas of learning. Further developments of the outdoor area, and opportunities to use this more fully in children's learning, is in hand.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teachers make the fullest use of assessment information to plan what pupils need to learn next and how they can best do this, so that all are appropriately challenged in their learning and make the best progress possible.

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Annex A

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

22 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Franciscan Primary School, London, SW17 8HQ

I am writing to let you know what I found when I visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. I spoke with many of you during my visit and you were always interesting to talk to, polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. Franciscan Primary is a good school.

I liked these things the most.

- Children in the Foundation Stage get a good start to their time in school.
- You work hard and enjoy your lessons.
- You are from many different backgrounds but all get on extremely well together.
- You know how to keep fit and eat healthily.
- The school helps you when you find learning difficult or are new to learning English.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and well looked after.
- You are able to go on lots of trips and have many after school clubs to choose from. I was extremely impressed by the performances of the gospel choir and Indian dance group.
- Your head teacher does a really good job, and is well supported by the staff.

I have asked the school to work on the following thing now. Teachers must carefully check how well each of you is doing in school. This will help them to plan what you each need to learn next and how you can best do this, so that you all make the best progress possible. The work must be just right for each one of you so that you are all challenged to do your very best, but nevertheless always enjoy what you are doing.

I did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector