



# St Francis de Sales RC Infant School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 102149  
**Local Authority** Haringey  
**Inspection number** 286290  
**Inspection date** 7 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Graham Lee

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	Brereton Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Tottenham
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-7		London N17 8DA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8808 4432
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	323	<b>Fax number</b>	020 8801 7023
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Ms Cynthia Davis
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Miss Margaret Williamson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 May 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## **Description of the school**

This is a larger than average infant school serving an area of high social and economic deprivation. Half the pupils are entitled to free school meals. Most are of minority ethnic origin. The majority are of Black African background and a significant minority have Black Caribbean heritage. Two out of three pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than average. Two thirds of children enter the school on a part time basis in the Nursery and the remainder join in Reception. The school is currently being led jointly by the retiring headteacher and an acting headteacher who will eventually assume full responsibility.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

Parents and pupils are rightly proud of their school because it provides an outstanding quality of education. Typical of the views of many, one parent commented, 'I continue to be completely impressed with the high standards and level of support and commitment of the staff'. The retiring headteacher has provided inspirational leadership over many years and has created a caring and nurturing Christian community where children and their families feel welcome and valued. Staff have very high aspirations for all, and the care, guidance and support of children are outstanding. Consequently, pupils feel safe and secure and thrive in this supportive environment. Their behaviour is exemplary, they are enthusiastic about all aspects of school life and achieve exceptionally well.

When they begin school, children's skills and understanding are well below average and many speak little or no English. The outstanding Nursery develops their confidence and social skills and helps them to rapidly acquire the language they need to make the most of the curriculum. Good provision in Reception builds effectively on these firm foundations. Pupils make rapid progress in Years 1 and 2 because of highly effective teaching and learning and a curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils. Particularly effective are the arrangements for teaching literacy and numeracy. This provides additional support in small groups for those who are experiencing difficulties and effective challenge for more able pupils. Consequently, pupils of all abilities, including those who speak English as an additional language, make rapid progress. By the age of seven they reach standards that are significantly above average. Together with their very positive attitudes to learning, this ensures that pupils are well prepared for junior school and the world beyond. As one parent put it, 'They create confident children who will obtain their place in society'.

Not only does the outstanding curriculum provide effectively for the development of pupils' basic skills, it encourages pupils to be creative and enjoy their education through a wide range of enrichment activities. It also ensures that their personal development and well being are high priorities. For example, a good range of sporting activities and an emphasis on nutritional diet have helped pupils to understand the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles.

The essence of the school's success is teamwork. The stable and highly skilled staff team share common values and have high expectations of all pupils. The school knows itself well and leaders at all levels play an important part in ensuring that high quality care and education are maintained year on year. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and challenging yearly targets are set. However, pupils are not always clear about what their targets are and how they might be reached. Similarly, teachers' marking does not always give pupils a clear idea of what they need to do to improve. Governors provide good support and have put in place effective measures to ensure that high quality leadership is maintained in a period of transition. In view of its track record of success and commitment to improvement the school is outstandingly well placed to go from strength to strength.

## **What the school should do to improve further**

- Help pupils to play a fuller part in improving their own work through the setting of targets and marking that consistently helps them to get better.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' achievement is outstanding. In spite of their very good progress in the Foundation Stage, standards remain a little below average by the time children enter Year 1 because of their very low starting points. From this point their rapid progress is illustrated by the well above-average standards they reach in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave. They do particularly well in reading because the skills are taught very effectively and systematically and fully involve parents. Higher attaining pupils achieve well and the proportion of pupils reaching higher levels is well above average. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those at the early stages of learning English make as much progress as other pupils because of the very good support they receive.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including the social, moral, spiritual and cultural elements, are outstanding. Their spiritual development is particularly noteworthy and reflects the Christian ethos of the school. They show a very mature ability to reflect meaningfully and prayerfully on their own lives and those of others. Pupils look after one another very well and are proud of their roles as 'playground buddies'. One explained that 'If someone doesn't have a friend we help them to find one'. Pupils were also clear that they could not keep 'bad secrets' if they hurt someone else. The way they move around the school site demonstrates their awareness of the need to adopt safe lifestyles. Pupils are extremely polite and friendly. Their enjoyment of school is evident in their very positive attitudes, good attendance and the way they talk enthusiastically about all aspects of school life. Pupils are very involved in the parish community and raise money for a variety of charities. They have put forward their views regularly through surveys and have made suggestions about the kind of equipment they would like on the playground.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' exceptionally good achievement is the result of outstanding teaching and learning. Teachers are very enthusiastic and enjoy excellent relationships with their classes. This rubs off on pupils who respond very positively and say that 'Teachers

make learning fun!' Teachers plan very effectively to meet the needs of all pupils and have high expectations of their work and behaviour. As a result, pupils of all abilities are challenged to achieve as well as they can. Activities are chosen well to engage and motivate learners. For example, pupils in Year 1 were considering writing a diary from the point of view of different characters in Cinderella. This was a challenging activity which made them eager to write. Teaching assistants make an excellent contribution to the quality of education, particularly for those who find things a little more difficult. For instance, they lead small groups very effectively in numeracy and literacy, which allows these pupils to gain confidence and achieve well. There are good examples of marking which gives pupils clear pointers about how to improve their work but this is not consistent in all classes.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

A high priority is given to developing pupils' basic skills, which results in their outstanding achievement. Very effective additional support is provided for those who are in danger of underachieving and those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Similarly, more able pupils are given additional challenges which help them to do well. Information and communications technology (ICT) is used effectively to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Provision for pupils' personal development is firmly and effectively embedded in all aspects of the curriculum and is evident in their outstanding attitudes and values. The curriculum is enriched through visits and visitors and a range of clubs. Ambitious whole school presentations such as 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' add impressively to pupils' enjoyment, and their social and cultural development. The curriculum in the Nursery is outstanding. It provides a stimulating range of activities that develop children's independence, confidence, skill and understanding in all areas of learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The strong Christian ethos of the school underpins the outstanding care provided for children and their families which, in turn, leads to pupils' exceptionally good personal development. The school looks after its vulnerable children and families particularly effectively and draws on the expertise of a wide range of outside agencies to support them. The high quality of care is widely recognised by parents who hold the school in high regard. The school engages parents in their children's learning very successfully. This is evident right from the Nursery where parents are welcomed and fathers come in to share their skills with the children in order to present good role models. Family learning groups also help parents to support their children. Parents feel very welcome and '...appreciate the open door policy if and when we are faced with difficulties and concerns', as one parent put it. Strong academic guidance contributes to pupils' outstanding achievement. Very good systems are in place to track pupils' achievement and to provide additional support where necessary. However, pupils are not sufficiently involved in the target setting process.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. The acting headteacher is an able leader who is supported very effectively by the retiring headteacher and a new deputy, who has brought new ideas to the team. Together they lead by example and set high expectations for all, which result in high quality care and education and pupils' outstanding achievement. They are supported very effectively by the subject leaders and a committed staff team. Although the school has been successful for many years, leaders are not complacent. They are constantly reviewing what they do in order to bring about further improvement. For example, they recognise that more can be done to develop the use of assessment to help pupils to improve even further. Governors have faced significant difficulties with recruitment in recent years. However, they have now filled all their vacancies and have made rapid improvements in fulfilling their role in providing challenge as well as support to school leaders.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

You may remember that I visited your school a little while ago to have a look at the things you do and to talk to you and your teachers. I am writing to thank you all for being so friendly and helpful. I really enjoyed my day at your school and I thought you might like to know what I found out.

You and your parents are right to be proud of St Francis de Sales because it is an outstanding school. You told me that you like being at school because learning is fun! Teachers plan lots of interesting things for you to do. I thought you all worked hard in your lessons and always tried to do your best. You were all very polite and extremely well behaved. Well done! You all feel safe in school because all the staff look after you so well. You also know that it is important to eat well and take lots of exercise.

You are all doing very well because teachers give you work which helps you to get better. Quite a lot of you told me how much you enjoy mathematics! Those of you who find things a bit more difficult or need a bit of help with English are given lots of help. Those of you who need harder work are given tasks that really make you think. You reach high standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time you leave. This means that you are ready to go to junior school and do very well.

Ms Mooney has led the school really well for many years. She is now ready to hand over to Miss Williamson. They are working very well together at the moment to make sure that things get even better for you. They get lots of help from all the staff who work very well together as a team. I have asked them to do one thing that I think might help. I want them to help you to get better by letting you know more about what it is you have to do to improve your work.

With the best of luck to you all.

Yours truly

Graham Lee

Lead inspector