



# St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 106762  
**Local Authority** Doncaster  
**Inspection number** 287602  
**Inspection dates** 23–24 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Stephen Hardwick HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Roberts Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Balby, Doncaster
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		South Yorkshire DN4 0JN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01302 344678
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	191	<b>Fax number</b>	01302 341231
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Paul Haczynskyj
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr N Collins
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2004		

<b>Age group</b> 3–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 23–24 January 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 287602
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

St Francis Xavier Catholic Primary School is situated in Balby, a residential area close to the centre of Doncaster. It serves two parishes, Sacred Heart and St Peter in Chains. Most pupils are White British. The number on roll and the proportion entitled to a free school meal are similar to the national average. Around a tenth of the pupils have additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities, a proportion that is below average. The pupils' attainment on entry to the school is slightly below average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

St Francis Xavier's is a satisfactory school with some good features. It has come a long way from a low point in 2003 and is highly regarded by parents. Based on its Catholic foundation the school places great importance on the pupils' safety and well-being and the need for everyone to succeed. It provides satisfactory value for money.

The pupils make satisfactory progress, reaching standards that are similar to, or just above, average. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall: it is good in upper Key Stage 2 but there are some weaknesses in the youngest classes. Teaching has not improved to the same degree as other aspects of the school's work and needs to be a focus for the next stage of development. The curriculum meets requirements and is enriched by a sound range of extra activities. The Foundation Stage is satisfactory but sometimes too little account is taken of the different needs of Reception and Nursery pupils.

Good provision is made for the pupils' personal development. The pupils are well behaved, attentive and interested. They readily take on responsibilities and, by Year 6, acquire the work habits that should serve them well at secondary school. Attendance has risen to the national average, reflecting the pupils' increasing enjoyment of school life.

The headteacher and senior staff give clear direction to the school's work. There is a thorough system for checking its performance and the governors maintain appropriate oversight of its affairs. The school has made steady progress since its inspection in 2004, building on the rapid gains made in the previous year. The issues raised in 2004 have been tackled successfully, though there is a need to raise standards in writing further. The school has well judged strategic plans, the coordinators for each subject have broadened their roles and the more able pupils are reaching higher levels.

The school's comprehensive programme for monitoring its work provides it with an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. It has sound capacity to move forward, based on the secure systems that have been established.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing.
- Improve the quality of teaching.
- Improve provision in the Foundation Stage, particularly for Reception pupils.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

There have been some variations but, taking the last four years as a whole, the school's results in the national tests at Year 2 and Year 6 have been similar to or just above average. Following its inspection in 2004, the school was asked to raise standards in writing and the progress of the higher-attainers. Writing remains a focus for the

school's efforts: results here follow the national pattern of being weaker than in reading, but they are not significantly different from the norm. However, in 2006, the school met or bettered its targets for the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in the national tests, underlining the success of strategies to stretch the more able.

The pupils make average progress between the ages of seven and 11 and there is no marked difference in the performance of different groups. This picture was reflected in lessons, including the Foundation Stage, with pupils making satisfactory and sometimes good progress.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Provision for pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Pupils enjoy attending school and thrive in the caring and nurturing family atmosphere. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good, underpinned by firm Christian values. Pupils are well behaved and polite. They follow rules sensibly and show caring attitudes. The pupils are punctual and the school has been successful in improving attendance so that it is now similar to the national average. Pupils strive to win the popular 'Top Dog' awards for good attendance. There are satisfactory links with the local community. The school council is well established and provides an effective vehicle for pupils to have a say in running their school.

The school takes good care of the pupils and their safety is a high priority. Regular assessments minimise any risks in school and on educational visits. The progress of all pupils is monitored closely and vulnerable pupils are given valuable additional support in the 'nurture group'. The building provides a very clean and attractive learning environment. Good attention is paid to health and safety: the school is working towards a second healthy schools award so pupils are well aware of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. Strong steps are taken to tackle any bullying that occurs. The pupils' basic skills and their ability to work independently and in groups should enable them to prosper in their next stage of education and beyond.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall: they are good in upper Key Stage 2 but there are some shortcomings in the youngest classes.

In all the lessons plans are detailed and based on appropriate learning objectives. Materials and presentations are carefully prepared and tasks are well organised. Additional adults give a skilled lead to group work and well-established routines enable lessons to proceed smoothly. The teachers' explanations are clear, reflecting their secure subject knowledge and awareness of national guidance.

Weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory lessons concern a slow pace, a failure to involve enough of the pupils when the class is being addressed as a whole and tasks that are undemanding or lack sufficient structure. The good lessons benefit from high expectations, a sense of urgency, lively introductions and repeated checks on how well the pupils are meeting their targets.

The pupils bring much to their learning. They are keen to contribute, attentive and readily get on with what they are asked to do. Aided by individual planning books, the pupils reflect on what they have gained and determine what they need to accomplish next; the oldest pupils can set their own criteria for success.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum fulfils requirements and meets the needs of the pupils satisfactorily, with an appropriate emphasis on the key skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Spanish is also taught to the Key Stage 2 pupils. Personal development is promoted well through a structured programme that helps pupils to know how to lead a healthy lifestyle and how to stay safe. A varied range of visits and visitors extends the pupils' opportunities and several after-school sporting activities add further enrichment. Links with the community include visits to the local museum, art galleries and theatres.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, with an appropriate balance between activities where the pupils have a degree of choice and times when they are taught in groups. This supports the pupils' personal development well but a few of the activities lack sufficient purpose and offer too little challenge to take the Reception pupils forward.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a good level of care and guidance for its pupils. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and say they feel safe, know what to do if they feel bullied and have good opportunities to discuss their ideas and feelings in 'circle time'. There are secure systems for child protection and adults are vetted for their suitability. The school makes good provision for pupils who need extra support, using the help of outside agencies when necessary. Parents particularly value the accessibility of staff when they need to discuss their child's welfare.

There are good systems to track and monitor the progress of pupils, enabling the school to provide the right level of support when it is needed. Pupils know their individual targets and understand what they need to do next to make progress. The daily 'planners' make a valuable link between home and school and enable pupils to evaluate their own progress. Pupils know their individual learning targets and strive to achieve them.

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## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, with some strong elements. The headteacher gives a firm steer to the school's work and he is well supported by the senior teachers and governors. Other staff are drawn into management roles appropriately, allowing everyone to contribute to shared goals. The school's Catholic foundation permeates all its work, alongside the promotion of tolerance and equal opportunities for all.

There is a good and comprehensive programme for monitoring the different aspects of the school's work, for instance, by observing teaching, analysing test results, tracking individual progress and interviewing pupils. The outcomes are reported in detail and action is taken accordingly. This approach has enabled the school to tackle thoroughly the issues from its inspection in 2004 and to evaluate the quality of its provision wholly accurately. However, progress in the last two years has been steady rather than rapid, because the overall quality of teaching has not improved at the same rate as other areas.

The school has satisfactory capacity to move forward. Strategic plans have been established, based on well-judged priorities. Resources have been deployed appropriately, with prudent budgeting and a sensible decision to delay the replacement of the deputy headteacher. Staff are held accountable for their responsibilities as class teachers and as subject leaders. The governors fulfil their duties, offering help and challenge to the senior team.

Parents, in their response to questionnaires, expressed great support for the school and there are suitable links with the church, the local community and other institutions.

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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>	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	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

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

<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>	3
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 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	2
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 for welcoming us to your school when we inspected it in January. You were polite and very helpful to us in showing us your work and telling us about your school. These are the things we found.

You told us that you enjoy school, feel safe and know how to lead a healthy lifestyle. You were well behaved, attentive to the teachers and keen to contribute in lessons. Your parents told us that they greatly support what the school is doing for you.

Thanks to the hard work of Mr Collins, the teachers and other staff, your school has improved a good deal over the last four years. Much has been introduced to help you learn, and Mr Collins and the governors make regular checks to ensure that everything is going to plan. By Year 6 you have the skills to move on to secondary education and your results in national tests have been similar to most other schools.

As Mr Collins and the governors know, there are some things that need to improve further. Much effort has gone into improving your writing and this needs to continue. We found that you are asked to work much harder in some lessons than others. You need to make good progress in all you do, so we have asked the teachers to make sure you learn more in some lessons, especially in the youngest classes.

We wish you well for the future.