



St Francis Catholic Primary School, Morley

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108016
Local Authority Leeds
Inspection number 287997
Inspection dates 6–7 December 2006
Reporting inspector Peter Howard

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Highcliffe Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Morley, Leeds
Age range of pupils	5–11		West Yorkshire LS27 9LX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0113 2145424
Number on roll (school)	139	Fax number	0113 2145424
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr John Lockwood
		Headteacher	Mr Dominic Williams
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school serves the township of Morley on the southern fringe of Leeds. Although the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average the families of pupils attending the school represent a wide range of social and economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is below average and that of pupils whose first language is not English is very low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is 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

Inspection findings agree with the school's own judgement that this is a satisfactory and improving school with the capacity to develop further. It has experienced a sustained period of disruption to staffing, which has only recently come to an end. This disruption has had a negative impact on several aspects of school life, including achievement and standards. The headteacher has coped well with these difficulties and is developing the strengths of an increasingly settled staff team, which in turn is improving provision. This improvement is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' achievement and personal development. For example, in 2006, following improvements in assessment and teaching, standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics rose and were above average. Standards in science were average. Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory.

Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. They have positive attitudes to school, their behaviour is good and they feel increasingly safe in school. Pupils value the emerging opportunities provided by the new school council to have a voice in school life. However, many initiatives are in their infancy and have not yet impacted on pupils' personal development and well-being which is satisfactory. This is a caring school where staff work hard to look after and support pupils. Improved systems for checking on pupils' progress are in place, but they are not yet used sufficiently well to provide effective guidance so that pupils know how to improve their work.

The school is beginning to check teaching and learning, but not yet with sufficient rigour to improve them significantly from their current level. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with a growing proportion of good teaching. However, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to participate fully in all lessons and engage in activities that encourage their independence as learners. Improvements to the curriculum in the Foundation Stage and in English and mathematics have had a positive impact on pupils' standards. Although the curriculum is satisfactory overall, the broader curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 is not sufficiently lively to consistently engage pupils' interest.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve children's achievement in English and mathematics by using the information from assessments more effectively in teaching.
- Improve checks on teaching and learning to further raise their quality.
- Ensure the curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 is more interesting and motivating to learners.
- Ensure that pupils play a more active part in lessons and become more independent in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children's attainment on entry to Reception varies from year to year because of the small numbers in each group. However, children's skills and knowledge on entry are broadly typical for their age, although skills in some aspects of literacy are weaker. Recent improvements to provision in Reception have introduced a range of activity areas, which effectively meet the needs of young learners. As a result children make satisfactory progress and, by the end of Reception, their attainment is broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 2 they attain average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

Pupils in Years 1 to 6, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress. In national tests at the end of Year 6, pupils have attained consistently average standards in English in recent years. Standards in mathematics and science have been more variable, ranging from above to below average. However, the school has been successful in improving its understanding of pupils' progress, raising expectations of pupil attainment and making some improvement to teaching. As a consequence, in 2006, standards in English and mathematics improved on those in previous years.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Many initiatives to improve pupils' personal development and well-being are relatively recent and have not yet had time to have a full impact. Pupils maintain good relationships with each other and with staff. They settle to their work quickly. The school works hard to ensure that pupils understand the impact of bullying and pupils say this is not a problem. They are developing effective strategies to keep themselves safe, for example by beginning to understand the dangers posed by drugs. Pupils are learning how to make healthy food choices and understand the value of taking exercise. They enjoy contributing to the wider community by participating in church festivals. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the role of the school council in developing the playground and are ready to take on more responsibility. Attendance is above average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers manage their classes well and are making increasingly effective use of display to promote learning. The school recognises that to accelerate pupils' progress expectations of what they are capable of must be raised and in the better teaching this works well. Improved assessment procedures are helping teachers to have an increasingly secure understanding of where pupils are in their learning. However, in a

small number of lessons teachers do not always use this information accurately and work does not always match pupils' needs. Teachers often provide good guidance to pupils at the beginning of lessons to explain what they must understand to achieve success in the work set. However, they do not always ensure a good balance between their role in lessons, for example explaining new concepts, and the time given to pupils to participate or work by themselves or with partners. As a result pupils do not have enough opportunities to be actively involved or develop independence as learners. On these occasions, the pace of the lesson and pupils' learning slows.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Following a recent review of the curriculum in Reception, provision is now appropriately organised in different activity areas, such as sand, water and construction that children are encouraged to access independently. Outdoor provision is not yet integrated into the curriculum in Reception and is at an early stage of development. There is a strong emphasis throughout school on English and mathematics, which is having a positive impact on standards. However, in Key Stages 1 and 2, the wider curriculum is not planned to be consistently lively enough to take advantage of pupils' eagerness to learn, to make learning fun and promote independence. For example, in science too little time is devoted to practical work to consistently engage the interests of learners. Enrichment of the curriculum, through visitors, visits, residential trips and out of school activities is satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Recent improvements to assessment procedures and systems for tracking pupils' progress ensure that the school has an increasingly accurate understanding of how well pupils are achieving. However, targets are not expressed in appropriate child friendly language and marking of pupils' work does not consistently give them the information they need to make better progress. New initiatives to improve support for pupils and further their personal development, such as a 'befriender' scheme to encourage pupils to support each other, are well founded, but at an early stage of development. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive satisfactory support overall. Whilst most teaching assistants give children good support a few need more guidance to improve their effectiveness. There are good arrangements in place for transfer to secondary education. Health and safety and child protection procedures are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's leadership is successfully drawing the staff together into an effective team. School self-evaluation is generally accurate. Where its judgements are overly generous, for instance in grading pupils' personal development and well-being and

care, guidance and support, it has focussed on the provision it is making, rather than the impact on pupils. Its priorities for improvement are expressed in satisfactory development planning. Middle managers are making an increasingly effective contribution to the leadership of the school. After a period of major change in membership, the governing body is working hard to ensure that it develops its understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and its role in setting the school's strategic direction. Financial management and the value for money given by the school are both satisfactory. The issues raised in the last inspection have been dealt with satisfactorily and the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further.

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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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
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?	3
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	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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

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?	3

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 your friendly welcome. I enjoyed my visit very much. Your school gives you a satisfactory quality of education.

What I liked about your school:

- that many of you behave well and work hard and that most of you get on well with each other
- how hard all the staff in school work, how well they look after you and how much they want you to do well in school
- how your teachers make it clear to you what you should have learnt by the end of the lesson.

I think there are some things that your headteacher and teachers should do to make St Francis a good school.

- Help you to be more actively involved in lessons and give you more opportunities to work with partners and in groups.
- Plan work that is more lively and interesting. For example, plan more practical work in science.
- Help you to progress more in English and mathematics by setting you targets that are easier to understand and explaining better how you can improve.
- Work even harder to check that all teaching is helping you to learn as much as possible.

You can help your teachers by working hard, making sure that you know your own targets, continuing to behave well and by taking advantage of all the opportunities offered by school.

I would like to wish you all the very best for your future at St Francis Primary School.