

# St Francis Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125203
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	315189
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Thrussell

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	245
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Paul Hooper
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Margaret Clerkin
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Whyteleafe Road Caterham CR3 5ED
<b>Telephone number</b>	01883 342005
<b>Fax number</b>	01883 340724

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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, and leadership and management, gathering evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with children, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but some of the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, have been included in this report, when appropriate.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. About a quarter of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, but very few have a home language other than English. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils have a variety of needs, the main ones being moderate learning and speech, language and communication difficulties. The school has gained Investors in People and the Artsmark Gold awards, and the Financial Management Standard in Schools accreditation.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Francis is a good school. The strongly committed headteacher, ably supported by the senior management team and governors, ensures a good quality of education for pupils. The pastoral care for pupils and their personal development are both outstanding. Good links with the Church, parents, other schools and agencies contribute to these. Parents have very positive views of the school. One commented, 'This is a wonderful school. My children have thrived and developed well, both educationally and personally, ready for what life holds.'

Pupils agree that 'It's a really good school' and that 'We can make friends easily'. Older pupils act as playground buddies and look out for lonely pupils. Pupils feel extremely safe and secure, knowing that staff are there to help them if they have any concerns. Excellent relationships help to develop pupils' high levels of self-confidence and esteem. They enjoy many things about school, as shown in their very good attendance. They particularly enjoy the wide range of clubs provided, which are well supported by both pupils and parents and encourage pupils to develop their particular gifts and talents. These opportunities, along with specialist language, drama, dance and music teaching, and events such as Arts Week and International Week, provide excellent curriculum enrichment. The school council takes its role seriously, knowing that it helps to make the school a better place, for example by helping to provide more playground equipment, and gaining the right for girls to wear trousers in winter. Pupils have a very clear understanding of the importance of keeping fit and healthy, and benefit from the wide range of sports on offer. At break times, they make good use of the spacious outdoor areas, demonstrating that they are very responsible and can play well together. Behaviour is excellent, resulting in a harmonious school and a strong eagerness to learn.

Achievement is good. Progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 is good overall and builds effectively on children's learning in Reception. At the end of Year 2, standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. In the 2007 tests at the end of Year 6, just over half the pupils achieved higher than the expected level in English and science, and just under a half did so in mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also achieve well due to the strong, well-organised support they receive. The school seeks and successfully acts on advice to support pupils with speech, language and communication needs. Given their high level of basic skills and excellent personal development, pupils are extremely well prepared for their future life and learning.

The school has identified a relative weakness in mathematics. Although mathematical skills are systematically taught, there have not been enough opportunities within the curriculum that challenge pupils to apply and develop these skills in real life, problem-solving situations. A relative weakness in English has been effectively addressed. Spelling and word building skills have improved through the adoption and consistent use of programmes throughout the school.

At the start of the current year, the school improved its systems for tracking and recording pupils' progress. It now uses assessment information to set challenging end-of-year targets for teachers to plan towards and for pupils to aim for, and to identify where pupils need additional support. As part of performance management, teachers are now more accountable for the progress pupils make throughout the year. This is helping to ensure that teachers look more closely at assessment information to ensure that lessons appropriately challenge all pupils. This practice, although helping to further raise rates of progress, is not consistent. In some

lessons, pupils, especially the more able, are not challenged sufficiently and therefore do not make the progress expected of them. Nevertheless, teaching and learning overall are good. Teachers establish very good relationships and lessons are well prepared and managed, so that pupils are attentive and quickly settle to work. Learning support assistants work well alongside teachers, contributing effectively to pupils' progress. Pupils are set individual targets to aim for in English and mathematics, but their understanding and use of them is inconsistent. Teachers mark work regularly, but there are generally too few comments that show pupils how to improve their work, or that say whether targets are being met.

The school development plan sets out appropriate areas for improvement, based on monitoring and careful self-evaluation. It shows actions for raising achievement and standards, but lacks detail about how that success will be evaluated. Teaching and learning are regularly monitored, but this does not sufficiently involve subject leaders. Where weaknesses in teaching are identified support is given, helping to maintain a high quality of teaching. Careful thought is given to the preparation and planning time provided for teachers. The use of a range of specialist teachers both enriches the curriculum and allows teachers to work together, sharing experience and expertise. Given the improvements since the last inspection, for example the time allocated to subjects and the use of information and communication technology to support learning, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children are extremely well provided for in the Foundation Stage. A very caring environment supports them in their learning. They enter Reception with levels of attainment generally above those expected for their age, although the school has identified that communication and social skills are now weaker than in the past. However, an emphasis on personal and social development means that children quickly become confident learners. Very friendly links with parents, and their confidence in the school, ensure that children quickly settle and learn the routines. Particular care is taken over the induction of children at the start of the school year. Children make very good progress and, when they start in Year 1, the great majority are working well towards the goals expected of them. A significant proportion fully meets or exceeds these goals. Planning shows a very good balance between activities directed by staff and times for children to explore and discover for themselves. Activities make good links between the different areas of learning within interesting topics that are further enriched by visits, for example to a farm. The outside area is incorporated well into children's learning. The school identified a weakness in mathematical calculation, which has been effectively addressed through more directed teaching.

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

- Make more use of assessment information to plan appropriate and challenging work for all pupils and to guide them in their learning, particularly the more able, and especially in mathematics.

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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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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

27 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Francis Catholic Primary School, Caterham, CR3 5ED

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 some of you during my visit and you were interesting to talk to, very polite and helpful. You spoke very enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. St Francis is a good school, and some things about it are excellent.

I liked these things the most.

- Children in Reception get an excellent start to their time in school.
- You work very hard and make good progress.
- You behave extremely well and enjoy your lessons.
- The school supports you well when you find learning difficult.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and extremely well looked after.
- You have a very good range of clubs to choose from and many interesting events and activities to take part in throughout the year.
- You know the importance of eating the right things and staying fit and healthy.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors do a good job.

The school carefully checks how well you are doing and the different levels at which you should be working. In order for the school to get even better, teachers need to make more use of this information, to plan what you need to learn next and to show you, for example through marking and targets, how you can improve your work. This will ensure that you are all challenged to do your very best, particularly in mathematics, and especially those of you who are quicker at learning. You can help by continuing to work hard, although not forgetting to enjoy your time at school.

I did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector