

St Francis Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125706
Local Authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	315290
Inspection dates	10–11 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Mike Capper

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Skidmore
Headteacher	Debbie Huxtable
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2005
School address	Rye Piece Ringway Bedworth CV12 8JN
Telephone number	02476 315279
Fax number	02476 315279

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils mainly come from the parishes of Bedworth and Bulkington. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average, as is the proportion identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The children's attainment when starting school in the Reception Year is broadly in line with nationally expected levels.

At the time of the inspection, three out of the seven classes were being taught by temporary teachers who are covering for an unfilled vacancy and long term absences. A permanent teacher starts work at the school in Year 2 in January 2008.

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 is a satisfactory school with good features, which continues to move forward under the good leadership of senior managers. However, the pace of change has slowed recently due to staffing difficulties beyond the school's control. Satisfactory teaching means that pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, although progress across the school is uneven. Pupils make the best progress in the Reception Year and in Years 3 to 6 where teaching is generally successful at meeting differing needs. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is less effective because work is not always pitched at the right level for all pupils, which slows the pace of learning. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 because extra support and good quality teaching help pupils to make particularly good progress in their final year in school. Standards are slightly higher in English and science than in mathematics because there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their numeracy skills in different subjects.

Throughout the school, adults are particularly successful in supporting pupils' good personal development. As one pupil said, 'Teachers look after us well and make sure we are happy.' The school's calm and welcoming atmosphere helps pupils to develop good social skills and to grow in confidence and self-esteem. Throughout the school, all teachers are hardworking and enthusiastic. They make learning fun, helping to ensure that pupils become eager and happy learners. Pupils are at ease when talking to adults and they behave well. They especially enjoy the exciting range of visits and visitors provided by the school. These activities help to bring subjects alive and enrich the otherwise satisfactory curriculum.

Leaders know that more needs to be done to increase the amount of good teaching and to check that recent initiatives, such as the greatly improved target setting, are being implemented consistently across the school and are being sustained. The monitoring of this feature is not always rigorous enough. Senior staff have tackled weaknesses from the last inspection vigorously, demonstrating that the school has a good capacity for further improvement. For example, provision in information and communication technology (ICT) has been greatly improved and pupils are now making good progress in this subject. Parents make a strong contribution to their children's learning, especially in Year 6, where they help with revision for end of year tests. Some parents are rightly concerned about the lack of continuity in their pupils' learning caused by several changes in teaching staff. Nevertheless, most are very happy with the school. One parent encapsulated the key strength of the school by writing, 'My child looks forward to every day spent in the secure and very happy environment of the school.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Foundation Stage (Reception Year) make good progress and, by the start of Year 1, most are working at or beyond the expected levels for their age. All adults work well together to create a calm, peaceful environment in which children feel safe. This ensures that children settle quickly and enjoy learning. Teaching is good and adults make effective use of assessment information to plan challenging tasks. Children enjoy their work, although there are occasions when they have to sit for too long at the start of lessons. There is a good curriculum and planning is thorough, with good use being made of the spacious outdoor area. Provision is well managed, and is now rightly focused on smoothing the transfer to Year 1, so that the good pace of learning is maintained when children change classes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching in Years 1 and 2 by ensuring that work is pitched at the right level for all pupils so that they learn more quickly.
- Monitor initiatives rigorously to ensure that they are being applied consistently across the school and are helping to improve pupils' learning.
- Give pupils more opportunities to practise their numeracy skills across the curriculum.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children make good progress in the Reception Year where individual needs are met well. Progress is more uneven in the rest of the school, resulting in pupils' achievement being satisfactory overall. In Years 1 and 2, where progress is only just satisfactory, the pupils' different learning needs are not always met well enough. Pupils' progress accelerates significantly in Years 3 to 6, especially in Year 6. Teaching is particularly good in this year group and pupils are given a high level of additional support. This helps them to catch up so that many reach the realistic targets set at the end of Year 2. As a result, standards are above average by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. Test results in mathematics lag slightly behind English and science because pupils lack confidence in solving problems and applying their skills to practical tasks. The school has rightly identified this as an aspect of the curriculum that requires improvement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Attitudes to learning and pupils' behaviour are good. Although rates of attendance are broadly average due to some families taking term time holidays, pupils thoroughly enjoy school. They happily take on many responsibilities. For example, in Years 3 to 6, pupils help each other in lessons by being made 'peer coaches', carrying out this role very conscientiously. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community. They sing carols at a local supermarket and raise funds for local charities. The school council gives pupils a good voice and helps them to contribute to school development. Activities such as these help pupils quickly to develop many of the skills that will stand them in good stead in later life.

Pupils' moral, social, cultural and spiritual education is good. From when they start school in the Reception Year, pupils quickly learn to care for others. Pupils are polite and respectful to adults and they treat each other well. Strong links with local parishes promote good spiritual development and help pupils to develop a good understanding of their own faith and culture. Pupils' knowledge of other faiths and cultures is less well developed.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy because the school promotes this very well. They enjoy taking exercise and are learning about growing their own healthy food. A recent project about 'being seen, being safe' and visits from the emergency services ensure that pupils have a good awareness of how to stay safe.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

All members of staff form good relationships with the pupils and provide purposeful activities in lessons. As a result, they engage the pupils' interest well and manage behaviour effectively. Teaching assistants provide valuable support, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, so that they can be fully involved in lessons. In the Reception Year, adults use praise well to build the children's confidence. However, teaching in Years 1 and 2 does not build well enough on this good start. Work is not always pitched at the right level for all pupils and the pace of learning is sometimes too slow. These weaknesses are much less evident in Years 3 to 6 because teachers' expectations are generally higher and teachers are more successful at ensuring that differing needs are being met. The quality of marking varies across the school. It sometimes identifies clearly for pupils the appropriate next steps in their learning, but this good practice is not yet consistent.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and balanced and includes satisfactory provision for literacy and numeracy. Increased links between literacy and other subjects and a greater use of ICT across the curriculum are helping to make learning more purposeful. However, pupils do not get enough opportunities to improve their numeracy skills by using them in different subjects.

The curriculum provides a wealth of interesting activities outside lessons that support learning well. Pupils especially appreciate the numerous opportunities that they have to work creatively in music and art. Visits and visitors enhance pupils' learning and help them to learn new skills such as gardening.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Members of staff provide high quality care to support pupils' personal development. Relationships are good promoting an harmonious working environment in which pupils feel secure and flourish socially. Pupils say that they 'always have someone to turn to' if they have a worry and they are confident that problems, including any occasional incidents of bullying, are dealt with promptly. The school works closely with outside agencies to safeguard pupils' well-being and to enhance the quality of pastoral support. For example, there are strong links with private providers who run a breakfast club on the school site.

Academic support helps pupils understand how to improve their work, but it is not yet being applied consistently across the school. Target setting and good quality marking are more firmly established in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are not always given sufficient guidance on how to improve their work. New procedures for identifying pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are clearly understood by staff and these pupils are given appropriate support.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Senior managers are hardworking and enthusiastic. They work well together as a team and have ensured that the school has continued to improve since the last inspection. There are good systems for finding out how well the school is doing, which ensure that senior managers have an accurate picture of the school's overall effectiveness. The analysis of test data and the setting of challenging targets are now being used rigorously to find out where extra support is needed so that, where necessary, pupils can be helped to get back on track. The impact of this process is not yet securely evident in improved progress in all classes because there has been a significant period of staffing changes. This has slowed the pace of change and had an adverse effect on the continuity of learning in Years 1 and 2, although the headteacher has worked hard to minimise its impact. There have been many helpful initiatives, for example, improved marking and the quality of other guidance given to pupils. However, monitoring has not focused closely enough to ensure that these initiatives are being applied consistently. It does not ensure all pupils achieve equally well and leaders can realise their aspiration for all areas of the school's work to be good.

Governors provide good support and make thorough checks on the school's work. They ensure that resources are deployed well to support learning. For example, extra staff were employed to support pupils in Year 6 last year, which helped to improve progress significantly.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

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?	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	3
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	3
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

12 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Francis Catholic Primary School, Bedworth, CV12 8JN

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. We enjoyed talking to you about what you do in school and what you think about it. You are getting a satisfactory education. We found some good things in the school and other aspects that could be improved.

Some of the things we found out about your school.

- ?
- Satisfactory teaching means that you make steady progress as you move through the school. You make the best progress in the Reception class and Years 3 to 6 but some of you could be doing better in Years 1 and 2. ?
- You are happy at school, behave well, and have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. The school council makes a good contribution to school life. We especially liked the way that 'peer coaches' support classmates. ?
- You are taught all the things that you should be learning and it is good that some of you are able to learn French or German. ?
- All adults in school are kind and caring and they provide you with many exciting things to do outside lessons. There is some super artwork around school, especially the clay angels! ?
- Most of your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school. ?
- The leaders of your school are doing a good job and know what needs improving. They are doing the right things to move the school forward.

What we have asked your school to do now.

- ?
- Help you to do better in Years 1 and 2 by ensuring that work is always pitched at the right level for you all. ?
- Check that recent developments, such as target setting, are used by all teachers to help you all to do even better. ?
- Give you more opportunities to practise your numeracy skills in different subjects.

We wish you well for the future. We hope you continue to help your teachers by working hard and trying your best.

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper Lead inspector

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Mike Capper
Lead inspector