

St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School, Crawley

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126046
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315410
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Wendy Forbes

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	419
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Bayes
Headteacher	Teresa Browne
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Southgate Drive Crawley RH10 6HD
Telephone number	01293 521009
Fax number	01293 521041

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2008
Inspection number	315410

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school that includes Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision for pupils aged from four. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Although there are above average numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups, the majority of pupils are from a White British background. The proportion that is at an early stage of speaking English is above average. The school has received a number of awards including Basic Skills and a silver ECO award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make continuously good progress. Overall, pupils reach above average standards by the end of Year 6. Their personal development is outstanding. Leadership is good. The headteacher has put in place the right strategies, which are ensuring provision is being strengthened. An outcome of this is the much-improved standards in writing as well as recognition that, through improving teaching, the same high standards can be reached in reading. There are outstanding procedures for welfare, health and safety. Pupils have an excellent understanding of what it means to live a healthy life and enjoy the opportunities provided such as 'Witness Fitness' and sports clubs to keep fit.

Parents express overwhelmingly positive views, typically saying, 'Children are encouraged to achieve their best and receive superb care.' They are rightly pleased with how much their children enjoy school. As one child said, 'Everyone is made to feel special.'

Most pupils start school in Reception with skills below those expected for their age particularly in speech and language. As a result of good teaching and a well-tailored curriculum, children in the EYFS make good progress in all areas of learning, working at or above the levels expected of them. Further good teaching and a well-balanced curriculum mean that through the rest of the school all pupils make good progress, particularly the most able older pupils in English. The school rightly recognises that reading remains a relative weakness and is an area for continuing development. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported; consequently, they also make good progress. All this means that pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education, as can be seen through activities such as their involvement in a local enterprise programme.

Teaching is good because most lessons are well planned, resourced and delivered. A good variety of activities and curricular events contribute to pupils' enjoyment of learning and help them progress well in their academic and very well in their personal development. Assessment systems are well structured throughout the school. However, marking, group targets and the use of this assessment information does not give all pupils enough information about what they have learnt so that they can make decisions for themselves about how to improve. The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership as can be demonstrated by the effective self-evaluation of the school's work. They are fully supported by governors, who carry out their roles well. The good leadership, strong team ethos amongst the staff, and the consistent focus on raising standards, particularly in reading across the whole school, demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The overall effectiveness of the EYFS is good. Good induction arrangements help to ensure that most children settle well into school routines. Because of the good provision, including the very careful assessment of individual needs, activities are well planned. As a result, children are actively engaged in purposeful, fun activities and make good progress towards their early learning goals. Teachers pay special attention to the very specific needs of children who need help, especially those who speak English as an additional language, which ensures they too make good progress from their starting points. Teachers and teaching assistants work well

together to provide children with good support. There is a good balance between activities that adults lead and those that children choose for themselves. Consequently, many children work independently as well as collaboratively and enjoy their learning. Their behaviour and personal development are outstanding for their age. The school has developed its outside learning areas to complement its well-planned indoor areas and this contributes to the children's progress. However, the current area is small and sometimes restricts its continuous usage for all areas of learning. The EYFS is well led by a knowledgeable and experienced teacher who now teaches in Year 1. Consequently, transition arrangements from EYFS to Year 1 are well planned, enabling a smooth transfer.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement in reading, so that standards are as good as those in writing.
- Improve the quality of marking, target setting and assessment so that all pupils have a clearer view of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards overall are above average and pupils achieve well. National tests in Year 2 indicate that standards are above average in writing, in line in mathematics and below average in reading. Pupils' work shows that achievement continues to improve through the rest of the school so that, by the end of Year 6, attainment overall is just above average, especially in English which is well above average as seen in the good quality of creative writing that pupils regularly produce. In 2008, Year 6 results showed that mathematics and science were broadly average with improvements in science. However, this group had a higher than usual number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Standards currently in English, mathematics and science are above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make equally good progress in line with their starting points. Those at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language make good progress in relation to their individual learning targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' excellent positive values, good attendance, and outstanding behaviour and attitudes reflect the extremely positive ethos through the school. Bullying is regarded by them as a rare occurrence. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is good, particularly spiritual development, which is a strength of the school. Pupils appreciate opportunities for reflection in assembly and the school's prayer room. They contribute well to the school community in many ways, such as the well-developed school council where their views are valued. For example, pupils spoke enthusiastically about their work in helping provide equipment and the impact this has had on their play. Pupils understand and empathise with the needs of others. They are involved in charity fund raising and regularly give to 'homeless' charities. This all helps ensure a smooth transfer to their local secondary schools.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers show good subject knowledge and an understanding of how pupils learn. Many lessons are structured and differentiated well. The pace is brisk and learning is fun, for example in a Year 2 lesson on 'How to write speech marks' and in a Year 6 lesson on 'Shape and Space'. Teachers' planning has clear information about what pupils are expected to learn and when. However, very occasionally, teachers do not challenge pupils well enough through marking and in the targets they are set. As a result, the pupils do not engage as well and then only make satisfactory progress. Good use is made of classroom interactive whiteboards and the school's specialist facilities to enhance teaching and learning throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A wide range of activities and opportunities enriched by special events and topics ensures that pupils gain a sense of enjoyment in learning. There is a very good range of well-attended extra-curricular activities. Pupils speak enthusiastically about these, especially the range of sport provided. Younger pupils benefit from the development of the Year 1 outdoor learning area. There are fewer opportunities to develop reading and writing through creative aspects of the curriculum, which the school is now rightly developing. Healthy lifestyles and staying safe are promoted well through pupils' involvement in working towards the 'Healthy School' award, in science and through the good personal, social and health curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Exceptional procedures help to ensure that pupils are well protected and safe. Teaching assistants and staff who speak additional languages provide good support for pupils who need help, particularly those who speak English as an additional language. The school works with a wide range of outside agencies to provide effective support for individual pupils with very specific needs. A good example of this is the provision of an on-site speech therapist. This is typical of the tailored support that ensures that the majority of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. The school has well-structured systems in place for the marking and assessing of pupils' work and most are generally used well. However, while pupils have group targets these are not individualised enough so pupils are not always fully aware of what will help them improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed by the headteacher. Ably supported by her senior staff, she has brought about good improvements since the last inspection. As a consequence, there have been improvements in achievement and personal development, particularly in the standard of creative writing. The setting of challenging school targets and the introduction of a range of procedures for monitoring teaching and assessing pupils' progress has helped secure these improvements. However, the analysis, evaluation and use of assessment data throughout the

school are not yet rigorous enough to raise attainment in key areas such as reading. The school provides a range of opportunities for subject leaders to develop their roles through action plans which are well linked to areas of whole-school improvement. Governance is good. It is well led by an excellent and knowledgeable chair of governors and other governors who together provide good support and challenge. Although the school is developing provision for global and cultural diversity within its community cohesion policy, it acknowledges that it remains an area for further improvement because of the limited opportunities to extend pupils' understanding in this area.

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
---	----------------

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which 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	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 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

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	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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

4 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School, Crawley RH10 6HD

Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school when we visited it recently. We enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at your work. We were impressed with how hard you work and what a happy place your school is.

You go to a good school where you make good progress. Your headteacher and staff really care about you, and provide lots of interesting extra activities for you, such as sport, use of the art and design room, music, ICT and special topic weeks which all help to make learning fun.

You told us you enjoy school and like to do your best. You get on well with each other and have outstanding attitudes to both work and play. You have a really good understanding of how to stay safe and how to adopt a healthy lifestyle. You help each other to have a happy time at school, particularly members of the school council who have helped to provide lots of equipment for everyone to enjoy their playtimes. As you rightly told us, you are taught well.

There are some things that your school could do better.

- Improve the progress you make in reading so that it is as good as your writing.
- Improve the quality of marking and assessment so that you have a clearer view of how well you are doing and what you need to do to improve. You can help by continuing to do all you can to make sure your school continues to improve and that you achieve the best possible results.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Wendy Forbes

Lead inspector