

St Francis Catholic Primary School, Goosnargh

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119633
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	327093
Inspection date	27 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Joe Clark

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)	86
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	Mr Vincent Gallagher
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Wilkinson
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Hill Horns Lane Goosnargh Preston Lancashire

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	27 March 2009
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Telephone number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- whether standards in English are high enough
- how well higher attaining pupils achieve
- how good is pupils' spiritual development.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate. Evidence was collected from discussions with senior leaders, teachers, pupils and governors. Parents' views as reflected in the Ofsted questionnaire were considered. Lessons were sampled and documentation scrutinised.

Description of the school

This is a small rural school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and most speak English as their first language. Pupils attend the school from a wide geographical area; most come from areas of high social and economic advantage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. There is no deputy headteacher or assistant headteacher. The school has Investors in People accreditation. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a mixed age class with other Key Stage 1 pupils.

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. Much of the provision is outstanding, for example, pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Spiritual development is excellent as a consequence of the many planned opportunities for reflection and pupils have due regard for others, for example, through charity work. Pupils' honesty and truthfulness is developed through assemblies and acts of worship. Relationships between children and adults, and with each other, are also exceptionally good reflecting the school's strong ethos and mission statement: 'We care for each other and always try to do our best.' Parents were very clear how much they value this aspect of the school's work. 'St Francis is a wonderfully caring school' and 'The staff create a warm, creative atmosphere for children to learn in', were typical comments.

Pupils join the Reception class often in groups as small as six in number. Consequently, their standards on entry can fluctuate quite sharply from year to year. Current standards on entry are typical for this age. Teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 vary from average to above average but tracking indicates all pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. Pupils make good progress as they move through Key Stage 2 and by the end of Year 6 their standards are generally well above average and represent good achievement. In 2008, the result of national tests at the end of Year 6, showed that standards were broadly average and not as high as in previous years. This was due to the wide range of ability in this cohort, as well as the instability caused by almost half the group joining the school during Key Stage 2. However, the school's reliable assessment information makes it clear that these pupils' achievement was good. Standards in English and science were higher than in mathematics. In these subjects, an average number reached the higher grade Level 5. However, in mathematics this number was below the national average and the more able pupils did not make enough progress because they were not always sufficiently challenged in lessons. Reflecting the school's determination to provide the best for all their pupils the response has been prompt. Booster classes are in place and these are accelerating the learning of these pupils. Pupils are currently making good progress and achieving above average standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the few who have English as an additional language, make good progress. Those with individual education plans achieve well and reach the targets set for them.

Pupils' achievement is good because of the good teaching they receive and the outstanding attitudes they bring to their work. Teachers make the lessons interesting and use a variety of approaches that make learning enjoyable. The school's excellent information and communication resources are used effectively to present lessons in ways that consolidate learning and motivate pupils. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and provide good quality support, especially to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Marking is generally helpful in identifying what needs to be improved. An outstanding curriculum fully supports pupils' learning. It is carefully planned to promote excellence and enjoyment. An exciting and creative thematic approach, which links pupils' learning in different subjects, makes learning relevant and exciting. Pupils spoke very positively about how much they enjoyed this themed curriculum and the outstanding range of visits and visitors which enhances it.

Pupils want to learn. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school, where their attendance is outstanding. They throw themselves enthusiastically into the life of the school, taking full advantage of the excellent range of extra-curricular activities provided, especially in sport but also in other activities such as music, reading and information and communication technology.

Residential visits promote tolerance and understanding. Their behaviour is good, both in and out of lessons. They say there is no bullying, and that they feel safe in school. This is not surprising given the exceptionally high quality of pastoral care they receive. All staff have had child protection training and safeguarding procedures comply fully with recent legislation. Pupils receive good guidance on how to improve their academic work. They make an outstanding contribution to the smooth running of the school as prefects, sports captains, and monitors of various kinds. They have good involvement with the local community, not only the local Parish community but the wider community also, for example, through the 'Community Kids' programme. The school's contribution to community cohesion is excellent.

First-rate planning and evaluation of its actions recognise the many strengths and have clearly identified the need to broaden pupils' horizons. This need is already being tackled with a close link being established with an urban school whose pupils are predominantly minority ethnic children and pupil exchange visits, and visits to the Mosque, are underway. Links with a local special school are well established. The school is recognised as a Fairtrade school and activities associated with this helps pupils understand wider national and global issues. Pupils talk knowledgably about the benefits of healthy eating and taking regular exercise. They know why the school achieved its Healthy Eating and Active School Awards. They are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education, leaving school with good basic skills, excellent social skills and with good experience of enterprise and charity work.

The school is well led and managed and gives good value for money. 'The standard of education at St Francis is second to none' summed up many parents' views. The headteacher is giving clear direction for what needs to be done to bring about further improvement. She is well supported by a team of teachers who are pulling together to compensate for the lack of senior leaders by developing their new subject leadership roles. These skills are developing well but new monitoring systems are not sufficiently embedded to ensure that teaching and learning, especially the challenge in lessons, continue to improve. Statutory targets are generally met. Staff development is good and there is good capacity to improve further. New and better systems for tracking pupils' progress are leading to earlier identification of any underachievement, particularly of more able pupils. Governors are supportive and well informed. Partnerships with other providers such as local secondary schools are excellent. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children start with skills which are similar to those generally found in children of their age, but this varies from year-to-year because of the small numbers involved. From their individual starting points children make good progress and by Year 1 are working at levels which are generally above average. This is a direct outcome of a well planned and interesting learning environment and stimulating teaching of literacy and numeracy skills. Children are well prepared for later stages of learning.

Teaching is good and builds on an accurate knowledge of children's achievement in all areas of learning. Staff plan carefully for the children's next steps in learning. They quickly establish good relationships through well planned activities to welcome children and their parents to the school community. Children's independent learning skills are developed well because they are taught to listen, learn and make decisions. There is a good balance between activities led by adults, such as imaginative work on letters and sounds or role-play based on traditional

tales, and the range of tasks children choose. Occasionally, the range of tasks that staff provide for children to choose from do not provide enough challenge for more able children.

Children's welfare is good. They learn to live healthy lifestyles, eating healthily, taking regular physical activity and keeping themselves clean and tidy. There is good support for children with learning and emotional difficulties. Leadership is good and as a result there has been significant improvement since the last inspection. Staff are reflective and self-critical with a good knowledge of the stages of children's development. Relationships with parents and other early years providers are very good and reinforce children's good progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Consistently, provide challenge in lessons to ensure more able pupils reach their full potential especially in mathematics.
- Further develop the role of subject leaders particularly in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and learning.

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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?	1
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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
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**

30 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Francis Catholic Primary School, Goosnargh, Lancashire,
PR3 2FJ

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. We really appreciated the help you gave us and the interesting and exciting things you told us about your school. It was a pleasure to talk to you, especially when dodging the wind on the playground, and touring the Millennium Walk! This is what we thought of your school.

Yours is a good school with much that is outstanding. Your attitudes to learning, for example, your attendance and your personal development in general, are all excellent. Your behaviour is good and everyone seems to get on well together. You say there is very little, if any, bullying and you feel safe in school. You have an excellent understanding and awareness of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle. You make an excellent contribution to the school and local community. The curriculum you follow is very exciting and relevant with an outstanding number of activities and events outside normal lessons.

You reach above average standards and achieve well. Your teachers work hard and make lessons interesting and enjoyable for you. In the classrooms, you have superb information and communication technology resources which your teachers use well to help you learn. The outside environment is stimulating and creative. It must be very pleasant in summer sitting in the willow dome, or working in the eco-garden.

We think the leadership and management of the school is good. You told us how much you appreciated what Mrs Wilkinson provides for you. Together with the other teachers and adults we think she takes excellent care of you.

We have asked the school do two things to make the school even better. The first is to make sure that all the work set is challenging to enable pupils to reach high standards, especially in mathematics. The second is to help the teachers who have responsibility for different subjects to become even more effective in helping you learn well and achieve high standards.

Thank you once again for all your help and good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

Joe Clark

Lead inspector