

Franche Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135050
Local Authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	329015
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	562
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	116
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Knowles
Headteacher	Val Weddell-Hall
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Chestnut Grove Kidderminster DY11 5QB
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Franche Primary is a very large school. It opened in September 2007 following the reorganisation of all schools in Wyre Forest. The current school is an amalgamation of Franche First School and Franche Middle School, with pupils from five other local schools that closed as part of the reorganisation. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need, is above average. A small number of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English have recently been admitted to the school.

The school works in close partnership with the private nursery on site so that staff and children from both nurseries work together as one unit. The Wyre Forest Nursery Assessment Unit for children aged 2 to 5 is also situated on site and is fully integrated into the school's Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision. A children's centre opened in September 2007 on the same site. The school has a variety of privately run after-school clubs and wraparound care facilities, and has achieved the Healthy Schools Award, Investors in People, Arts Mark Gold, Active Mark Sports England, Inclusion Quality Mark and leading aspects award for Early Years in the last year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Franche Primary is a good school. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders the school has emerged from a period of low morale and difficulties during the protracted reorganisation of the local schools. There is a strong commitment amongst all staff to provide the best education for the pupils and the ethos of care is outstanding. The school has only been open for just over a year but in this short time, attendance has been improved and is now above average. Disaffection between pupils from the different schools has gone and behaviour throughout the school is now excellent. Such is the commitment to the new school that many staff gave up much of their summer holidays to refurbish and paint the school building in readiness for the new start. This commitment to high standards is particularly evident in the EYFS, where the high level of partnership between the maintained nursery and the privately run nursery ensures that all children have a good start to their education. All staff in the EYFS have a good understanding of how these young children learn and the classrooms provide an exciting place to experiment and explore, to develop new knowledge and skills.

Standards in Year 6 remain below average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) due to pupils' inadequate progress in the past, but this is being rapidly addressed by good teaching. Pupils now achieve well, but the school recognises that there are still some inconsistencies within the teaching, and its quality is not yet consistently high enough to overcome the legacy of previous underachievement and ensure that pupils are reaching the standards expected of them by the end of Year 6. The school has recently introduced good strategies to help pupils evaluate their own work and to understand how to improve, but despite some good practice these are inconsistently applied and not yet sufficiently effective.

Pupils' attitudes to their work are exceptionally good. They feel part of a united family and want to do well. As one pupil put it, 'It's a big nice caring school.' Another commented, when asked what would he change, 'Nothing because the teachers are all so nice.' Although pupils' personal skills, including cooperation and taking responsibility, are very good, many pupils are only satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of education because of their weak academic standards. Pupils do, however, have an excellent understanding of how to develop a healthy and safe lifestyle that stands them in good stead for the future. Leadership and management at all levels are good. Partnerships with parents and links with an extraordinary range of outside agencies support families and children very well. Parents are secure in the knowledge that children are safe, protected and happy.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Children enter the nursery with a narrower range of experiences and skills than expected for their age. They make good progress across all areas of learning and reach the standards expected by the time they transfer into Year 1. Children settle exceptionally well in to the combined nursery because of the excellent partnerships built with families by all the staff. Children quickly recognise daily routines and feel safe and secure. After only two weeks in school, it was clearly evident that children in the nursery had grown in confidence under the supportive care of their key workers. They were now able to use the toilets without support. They prepare their own snacks from the healthy choices made available. Welfare arrangements throughout the school are excellent and this is

just as evident in the EYFS classes. Children's learning and development are well planned and based on careful observations of their progress. In both Nursery and Reception classes children's interests are used to stimulate their desire to experiment and explore. A well balanced range of both adult-led tasks and activities that children choose for themselves are available in the well resourced classrooms and outside areas. Children in the special needs resource centre are well cared for. Their specific needs are well understood, and experienced and knowledgeable staff enable children to achieve well from their different starting points. The headteacher's vision created the combined nursery and strong leadership from the EYFS senior staff has ensured that good provision is made for children of all ages and abilities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching is of a consistently high standard so that pupils reach at least expected standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT by the end of Year 6.
- Ensure that strategies for helping pupils to understand how well they are doing and to recognise how they can improve are consistently applied through the school, so their progress increases.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils came to Franche Primary from a variety of other schools where standards and achievement were not consistent. Many pupils in Years 3 to 6 made inadequate progress in the years prior to amalgamation because of the disruption in teaching and learning. This is now changing due to the school's focused attention on raising achievement. Inconsistent provision in the past has left a mixture of standards. In Year 2, standards in 2008 were broadly average but progress in the last year was good to achieve these standards, especially in numeracy and writing. Last year good progress was also made in most classes in the upper school (Years 3 to 6) but not enough to ensure standards were in line with those expected for their age. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress so that many no longer need intensive support. The few pupils learning English as an additional language who have moved into the school over the last few years are also now making good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils really enjoy school, participate in all that it offers and concentrate in their lessons. They show great care and respect for each other's feelings and exhibit real maturity when talking about tragic events that have affected the school. The school is a harmonious community where pupils of all backgrounds and abilities are considered part of the 'Franche family'. Pupils say there is no bullying. Pupils are polite and considerate and take responsibility well. They play a very effective part in improving the life of the school as monitors, playtime leaders and school councillors. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe and are aware of the possible dangers, such as those linked to the Internet. They enjoy the school's new healthy menu and regularly make positive choices about what they eat. They also appreciate the many opportunities in the school to keep fit.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers' subject knowledge is usually good and they make lessons interesting. The style of teaching is lively and most lessons move along at a brisk pace. The objectives for the lessons are shared with the pupils, who are increasingly helped to understand what they need to do to be successful in their work. Assessment of pupils' work is typically used well to plan the next lesson, but occasionally the work is not sufficiently matched to the range of abilities in the class, and the more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. On the other hand, those pupils who are a little slow to grasp ideas and those with significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly well supported. Teaching assistants are experienced and many show good levels of expertise when supporting these pupils, enabling them to succeed. Teachers' marking celebrates pupils' effort but does not yet consistently reflect targets for the next stages in learning and so support pupils' improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and well balanced and staff are increasingly making links across subjects, thus making lessons more meaningful and interesting to the pupils. Some subjects are taught by specialist teachers, and this supports pupils' progress well. There is a strong focus on developing pupils' personal development, emotional growth and understanding of roles and responsibilities. Teachers ensure that pupils gain an effective awareness of other cultures and religions, but as yet this is not underpinned by links with schools that have a wider multicultural community or other schools around the world. The curriculum for ICT is satisfactorily broad but there are weaknesses in its balance due to networking difficulties caused by old equipment. Interactive whiteboards are used well by some staff to engage pupils' interest and good understanding, but some staff lack the confidence to use the equipment really effectively. Many additional activities support and extend pupils' experiences and enjoyment of learning, both during and after the school day.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The levels of personal and pastoral care given to all pupils are outstanding. Relationships at all levels are really strong and pupils feel able to talk to any member of staff if they have a problem. When discussing the impact of a fellow pupil's sudden death, another pupil said, 'We got through it together.' Vulnerable pupils, those with difficulties at home and those with emotional problems are identified immediately and support is provided that matches both the child's and the family's needs. The local community police service, for example, has a base at the school for parents to access when necessary. Safeguarding procedures are all in place and rigorously monitored.

Academic support and guidance are satisfactory. Rigorous systems for monitoring pupils' progress are in place but the resulting information is not yet consistently used by teachers to set effective targets for pupils' next stages of learning. The academic support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, however, is strong. Targets are clear and both pupils and parents are kept well informed and involved.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Outstanding leadership from the headteacher and senior leaders underpins the pupils' good academic progress and personal development made over the year. The strong family ethos underpins all of the school's work and there is a clear focus on high achievement. The school is successful in its promotion of community cohesion through the inclusiveness of its approach to pupils and staff, but also in the way it supports its families and the local community through the children's centre, and provision of wraparound care and adult courses. Monitoring of the school's work is well organised and thorough, with the result that there is a good understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. The school development plan is manageable and well focused. Responsibilities are effectively shared amongst the staff. Some are still a little new to their management role but are already having a positive impact. The school is well supported by the governing body. Many governors are new but the core of experienced governors has a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The rate of progress over the last year and commitment of all staff are testimony to the school's good capacity for further improvement.

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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	NA
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	3
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	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	3

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**

10 October 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Franche Primary School, Kidderminster, DY11 5QB

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. You are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you. You and your parents are correct in thinking that you go to a good school that has lots of outstanding features. Here are some of the things we found out:

- Franche Primary has made lots of progress since it opened just over a year ago. This is due to the outstanding leadership of your headteacher and senior teachers and because of all the hard work of the staff.
- You make good progress in your work but are not yet reaching the standards expected in Year 6.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you get on with each other very well. You are polite, friendly and helpful to everyone. You understand how to keep yourselves safe, and make extremely positive choices about staying healthy and fit.
- The school is an exciting place to be. You clearly enjoy your lessons and often have lots of fun. You work hard and want to do well.
- The provision for children in the Nursery and the Reception classes is good.
- You are taught well and your teachers work hard to make sure that your lessons are interesting. You have lots of additional things to do, including many visits which extend your experiences and fun.
- All the staff look after you extremely well so you feel safe and are happy.

Even though Franche Primary is a good school, there are some ways in which it can do better. We have particularly asked the headteacher and governors to do two things.

- To make sure your lessons always help you to make good progress, so that you reach at least the standards of work expected by the time you reach Year 6.
- To help you to always understand how well you are doing and how you can improve your work.

Thank you again for helping us with our questions and making our visit to your school so pleasurable.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Callaghan Lead inspector