

St Francis de Sales RC Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102143
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	335846
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Nasim Butt

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Urban Jacobs
Headteacher	Gillian Hood
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons, observed 12 teachers and spent 9 hours looking at learning. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and the school's School Improvement Partner. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, self-evaluation documentation, pupils' work, a range of policies and 252 parental questionnaires.

An Ofsted administrative error resulted in the omission of one question in the parental questionnaire. Whilst this has not affected the overall outcome of the inspection it does mean that the parental response on the question 'The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example, changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)' is not recorded in the report.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how effective leaders at all levels are in raising standards and accelerating the progress which pupils make
- how teachers are enabling pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the more able, to learn effectively and to make the best possible progress
- how effectively assessment data are used to set individual pupil targets and support their learning
- the effectiveness of self-evaluation processes and development planning in securing more rapid overall school improvement
- the effectiveness of procedures for safeguarding.

Information about the school

At the school's previous inspection in January 2007, it was judged to no longer require significant improvement and subject to a notice to improve.

The school serves a diverse area and is larger than average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is very high, and the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The main feeder school is the neighbouring infant school. The current acting headteacher has been in post since September 2009 and was previously the deputy headteacher. The school is led by the same governing body as the infant school because the local authority is moving towards a federated model of one school led by an executive headteacher in September 2010. The school achieved the Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA) in 2009.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

St Francis de Sales is a satisfactory and improving school. It has several good features. There are areas of strength but also areas that the school acknowledges need to be improved. Whilst achievement is satisfactory overall, it is inconsistent because teaching does not always make the same positive impact on pupils' learning throughout the school. A large majority of parents responded to questionnaires and expressed appreciation of recent improvements and the good quality care and learning opportunities. One parent summed up the views of the vast majority saying, 'The school has hard working staff and is one of the best in North London. There have been many improvements since the new acting headteacher started.' Pupils unanimously agree that they enjoy school, they all feel very safe and they are encouraged to be healthy.

The school ethos is friendly and welcoming, relationships are good and pupils make good gains in their personal development. Pupils join Year 3 with broadly average attainment and by the end of Year 6 they reach national averages. Pupils' achievement is therefore satisfactory. Care, guidance and support are strong, so pupils behave well and are sensible and enthusiastic learners. The quality of teaching is improving and a growing proportion of lessons are good. However, teachers do not consistently use assessment information to match tasks closely enough to the learning needs of pupils, especially the more able. Written feedback is not always linked to individual learning targets and is therefore not precise enough to accelerate progress. Additionally, progress in writing for groups of pupils across Years 3 to 6 is inconsistent.

The acting headteacher and senior management team lead the school well and have a clear vision for its future improvement. Governance, however, is inadequate because lack of training and experience means that most do not have the knowledge and skills to challenge the school to do better. More rigorous systems for evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the school are playing their part in improving its performance, and middle leaders are playing an increasingly effective role. The work done to improve attainment and achievement, and the effective action being taken to eradicate pockets of weakness, demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good by:
 - ensuring all teachers use assessment more effectively to plan lessons that provide appropriate challenge to different ability groups
 - providing pupils with consistently good quality written and oral feedback, linked

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to learning targets, to support them in making further improvements.

- Accelerate progress and raise standards in writing by:
 - ensuring key skills in writing are taught consistently well
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their writing skills across the curriculum.
- Improve the quality of governance by:
 - ensuring all governors are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to discharge their statutory functions competently and hold the school to account.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils enjoy their lessons because strong relationships contribute to a positive climate for learning. Although outcomes in English were not as strong as those in mathematics last year, there have been improvements, but this is not yet consistent in all classes. For example, in a Year 5 numeracy lesson, many were able to talk knowledgeably about the benefits of rounding strategies when solving a practical problem on the costing of different holiday destinations. The school's tracking and inspection evidence indicate at least steady progress for all groups this year, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils who do not speak English as their first language. Skills in information and communication technology are improving. Writing skills are less well developed and this is limiting pupils' achievement and their future economic well-being. The school is now focusing on developing writing skills across all year groups, but strategies taken have not had time to make a full impact.

Pupils' attendance is high because they enjoy coming to school. Pupils behave well and are courteous and polite to their peers and the adults who work with them. Most pupils say they feel very safe because relationships are good and they can discuss any problems they have with adults. Pupils demonstrate good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, enjoying their nutritious lunch and attending the activity clubs. They have well-developed skills in working collaboratively and cooperatively with others. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes well to the strong sense of community within the school. Impressive displays adorn the school's walls and enhance pupils' awareness of other cultures. Pupils' contribution to the local community is less well developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching throughout the school is not yet consistent enough to ensure good learning. In many lessons, teachers use assessment information well to plan work that challenges most groups effectively within the class but this is not even, especially for more able pupils who are not always fully challenged. Consequently, the match of work to pupils' ability is not always precise enough to ensure consistently good progress. Lessons are well planned and most have good pace and high expectations but pupils are not always able to assess how much they have learned. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants in class and small groups so they make the same progress as their peers.

The curriculum provides well organised learning opportunities that make a sound contribution to pupils' academic and personal development. Well-planned trips, visitors and visits enrich the curriculum. Many pupils value the opportunity to exchange letters with their pen pals in schools in Ghana and Ireland. The partnership with a local high school is having a good impact on the quality of French teaching.

Pastoral care is strong because the staff understand the needs of those who require extra support to help them move on in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good quality care and, as a result, gain confidence in their own abilities and build competence to tackle new work. Support for vulnerable pupils in the sessions with the school counsellor is effective and valued by pupils. The Congolese Association works well with a group of pupils and their parents to develop their literacy skills.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders demonstrate drive and ambition to take the school forward and have been effective in a short time. The acting headteacher has a clear vision and is determined that the school should move forward. She has a realistic view of teaching and has used this information to sharpen provision and target the most important areas that need improvement. The acting headteacher has gained the respect of pupils, parents and staff. She is well supported by senior and middle leaders who monitor and evaluate the work of the school effectively in the majority of areas. Tracking of achievement is now strong and senior leaders are analysing data rigorously. They quickly identify any dips and swiftly put sensible strategies in place to promote improvement. The school promotes equalities soundly, as reflected in the profile of achievement across ability groups. The school's Leading Parent Partnership Award (LPPA) demonstrates the strong commitment to parental engagement.

Child protection and safeguarding procedures are sound and meet statutory requirements satisfactorily. The school has developed a good range of links both within, and beyond, the community but the promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory because the school has not yet undertaken an incisive analysis of its context.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents have positive views about the school. In particular, they praise the way that the school cares for their children and keeps them safe. They are very confident in leadership and management and the school's response to their suggestions and concerns. Parents also recognise that their children are taught well and that the school is effective in promoting healthy lifestyles. A very small minority are of the opinion that the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspection findings do not confirm this view as behaviour was found to be consistently good. An overwhelming majority are happy with their child's experience at the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Francis de Sales RC Junior School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 252 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 355 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	122	48	124	49	5	2	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	122	48	128	51	1	0	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	109	43	137	54	6	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	90	36	148	59	10	4	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	91	36	155	62	1	0	1	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	81	32	157	62	10	4	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	27	173	69	7	3	1	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	69	27	164	65	14	6	1	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	87	35	148	59	12	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	72	29	160	63	12	5	1	0
The school is led and managed effectively	92	37	150	60	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	100	40	144	57	6	2	1	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



20 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Francis de Sales RC Junior School, Tottenham N17 8AZ

Thank you all very much for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking with you and your teachers. We enjoyed your assemblies and were impressed by how polite and well behaved you all were. You and your parents told us how much you enjoy school and all the activities. We found your school is satisfactory but things are improving.

These are the things we found that your school does well.

- You all enjoy learning and your attendance is high.
- Your behaviour is good and you are sensible and know how to keep extremely safe.
- Your school cares for you well and teaches you how to be healthy and to respect and care for others.
- Your headteacher and senior managers have high expectations of you and they give a strong lead to everyone.
- You make sound progress through the school.

All staff work well together to ensure the school continues to improve.

There are four things we have identified for staff and governors to improve.

- Ensure that teachers use assessment information to plan work that is closely matched to your ability so that you are all appropriately challenged, especially those of you who find the work easy, and that they give you good guidance on how to improve your work.
- Ensure that you all reach higher standards in writing by making sure that you are being taught all the key skills and have more opportunities to practice your writing in other subjects.
- Ensure the school's governors challenge and support the school more effectively. You can help by working harder at improving your writing and acting on teachers' advice on how to become even better.

Thank you for a very enjoyable and memorable visit to your school and best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Nasim Butt

Lead Inspector

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