

St Francis Church of England Aided Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103546
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	336105
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Andrew Stafford

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Giles Allen (Acting Chair of Governors)
Headteacher	John Croghan
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2007
School address	Teazel Avenue Bournville Birmingham
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons with eight teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school development plan, safeguarding and welfare arrangements and records of pupils' progress. Inspectors also analysed questionnaires from pupils and staff as well as 124 from parents.

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

the level of challenge in teaching and learning across the school

- how assessment is used to support pupils in reaching their targets
- how the leadership team develops and drives improvement and evaluates the actions taken
- provision and progress for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school with a nursery serving a residential area of the city. The school has been jointly led by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher for the past year in readiness for the headteacher's retirement at the end of the summer term 2010. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is low, as is the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds including those who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools status and Activemark Award. The school provides pre- and after-school childcare that is managed by the governing body.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Francis CE school is a good school with some outstanding features. The strong, inclusive ethos supports all pupils and staff in establishing strong relationships with each other. 'Fantastic school. Excellent caring and well-structured teaching. I would not change a thing', 'our child enters with a smile and leaves with a smile', represents the many positive comments from parents. Pupils are enthusiastic about their school and the many opportunities they have to 'write, do art, make music, play sport and use the outside area'. The leadership and the governors are clear about the strengths of the school and are constantly reviewing practice to ensure continuing good progress and further improvements in outcomes for pupils. As a result there is a strong capacity to improve.

The behaviour of pupils is excellent; they are unfailingly polite, care about each other and make the most of opportunities to help younger ones in the school. As a result there is no disruption to learning. Attendance is high, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy, and stay safe, and engage in many activities to support this; they also choose to eat healthily from the good school lunch provision. Whether as register monitors, paired readers, gardeners or play leaders there are ample opportunities for pupils to make outstanding contributions to the school and wider community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also outstanding as seen in assemblies that are joyous celebrations of their successes and achievements.

The thorough induction process means that children make an excellent start to school. They make good progress throughout the school and as a result pupils leave well equipped for the future with above-average attainment.

The majority of teaching across the school is good and nothing is less than satisfactory. Teachers make links across the good curriculum to engage pupils in their learning, but do not always plan tasks with a suitable level of challenge for pupils, especially those of higher ability. Pupils are clear about what they are learning and what they must do to improve, particularly in English and mathematics. Pupils learn to use success criteria to know how well they have done. However, marking and feedback is not always used to help pupils understand what they must do next.

Governance is good. The governors are strongly committed to the school, bringing many skills to the leadership and management. They give challenge and support in order to drive improvements in the school. They have given stability to the school during recent changes and work closely with the recent appointments to the senior leadership team. The middle management of the school is now being developed, as the skills of leading

teaching and learning are not yet completely established. Subject leaders are not yet fully identifying areas for development from monitoring of lessons, scrutinising pupils' exercise books or using data to help raise standards.

There is excellent pastoral care for pupils, including support from a specially trained learning mentor. Outstanding partnerships with outside agencies contribute to the very strong links with families that are developed and maintained throughout school and parents and carers are extremely supportive of the school's provision for care and learning. Targeted support enables all pupils to make good progress, and for some it is outstanding. As a result pupils speak highly of the help they receive and parents comment on the 'safe and caring environment for learning'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better across the school, by ensuring that:
 - lessons provide sufficient challenge for all pupils, especially those of higher ability
 - all marking supports pupils to reach their targets.
- Extend the role of the middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school in order to improve provision and raise achievement further.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils start Year 1 with above average attainment. By the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils have made good progress and, over the last three years, achieved above-average attainment in the national tests. Pupils are helped to make good progress in their lessons because they know and understand the very clear learning objectives and are learning to assess their own work against success criteria. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have well-planned targeted support to ensure their good progress.

Pupils are proud of their school, achieve well and enjoy the many opportunities that they are offered to develop skills in a wide variety of areas. Pupils are developing excellent musical skills through superb opportunities for learning and practising instrument playing. They speak of feeling very safe and have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They are confident that staff will help to sort out any problems and are very knowledgeable about e-safety following recent good guidance from the school. Excellent behaviour means that playtimes are safe and classroom learning partners look out for their partners in the playground to help all pupils to play safely together.

The pupils' very strong understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles and the effect of this on their bodies is further supported through two hours of physical activity each week, plus swimming for each age-group, and the many extra-curricular sporting activities available. Pupils are encouraged to have a voice and leadership within the

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

school through the school council and eco-committee. These have led to improvements in provision for playtime and developments of the grounds. Pupils are deeply involved in Bournville village and church events and in various fund-raising initiatives.

Pupils are able to apply their well-developed skills in all subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT), across the good curriculum. Induction procedures and excellent links with the secondary school mean that all pupils are confident about their next steps.

The strong Christian ethos supports the many opportunities provided to reflect in worship, teaching time and in artistic and musical involvement. There is a good understanding of cultural influences on their heritage, and this is being developed constructively through curriculum activities and links to schools with different religions.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

The majority of teaching is good because teachers plan interesting and lively lessons that motivate and interest pupils, encouraging a 'love of learning', as a parent commented. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make effective use of ICT.

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

They are skilled at enabling pupils to take time to think and feel able to share their thinking, confident that they will be listened to. Where teaching is good, pupils have a good understanding of lesson objectives and of their targets. Marking is used to help pupils know where they have succeeded and what they need to do to improve, but this is not yet consistent across the school. When sufficient challenge is provided for all pupils, this ensures that the higher-ability pupils reach their full potential.

'This is a very nurturing and caring school. It has helped our son develop and grow and will send him to secondary school full of confidence and with an awareness of the needs of others,' wrote one very happy parent. The good support for all pupils in the school is apparent in the well-planned provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Targets provided for these pupils are clear and focused. Vulnerable pupils are very well supported and provision of emotional support for pupils and their parents is valued by all. Teaching assistants play a key role in this, leading targeted support for individuals and groups as well as support in lessons; parents typically comment that 'learning support staff are excellent'.

Pupils are enthusiastic about the wide range of enrichment opportunities provided through residential trips throughout Key Stage 2, and an extensive range of visits and visitors. After school clubs are well attended and address a range of interests.

The popular pre- and after-school childcare provision contributes well to above average attendance and extends pupils' learning experiences and social skills.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The shared leadership between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher has given the school strong direction and purpose. They have high expectations in ensuring that all pupils achieve their best and are happy and safe in school. They are well supported by all staff and there is a good team spirit, an ethos of mutual support and encouragement, and enthusiasm to further improve the school.

A team of skilled and knowledgeable governors are ably led and are highly effective in monitoring the school's strategic development and acting as a 'critical friend'. They play a key role in the school's ongoing development. Plans are in place to develop the role of subject leaders to enable them to become more skilled in analysing data and more rigorous in monitoring teaching and learning in their subjects, in order to raise achievement further.

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

Parents are very supportive and speak extremely highly of the school. They are keen to be involved and appreciate being kept informed through updates on the school's website. There are many very effective partnerships which promote pupils' learning and well-being with especially strong links with the secondary school and its cluster.

Promotion of equal opportunities is good. All pupils are valued as individuals and there are opportunities for them to develop their particular skills and interests.

Safeguarding procedures are secure, with robust systems in place that are well monitored by governors. The promotion of community cohesion is good. The school has good links with the local community and has established strong links to the wider national community. Video conferencing with children in France is developing good links to the global community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skill levels in line with those typically expected for their age. They make good progress throughout the Nursery and Reception Class and enter Key Stage 1 with skills that are above average. The comprehensive induction process ensures that children settle quickly and parents speak highly of this, expressing views such as 'a fantastic start to life'.

Staff have a good understanding of the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and plan well to enable children to learn and develop in all areas of the curriculum. Assessment informs planning and is based on observations of children involved in their own choices of activities as well as some focused tasks. The recently

appointed teacher is ensuring that her knowledge is further developed through training and understanding and using data effectively.

Children thoroughly enjoy their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage and, because resources are easily accessible, they have frequent opportunities to develop their own learning both inside and outside. They are able to discuss what they are doing and make decisions for themselves, such as choosing the material from which to make their mode of transport in the 'Going Places' project. They are keen to share their learning and respond to probing questioning about what they have been doing. Children share their love of reading with adults and older pupils. There are plans to further develop the use of the whole school grounds and to ensure all-weather use of the outside area through the installation of canopies.

Children are encouraged to lead healthy lifestyles with healthy snacks and drinks, to follow hygiene routines and to take plenty of exercise, including regular warm-up sessions led by staff. They are taught how to feel safe and are well supported at playtimes by the safe environment and good supervision. Their behaviour is excellent; they play well together, cooperate in activities and listen carefully to each other in circle times. The close links with Year 1 mean that the transition to Key Stage 1 is effective and ensures continued good progress.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Over half the parents and carers returned the questionnaires and the majority wrote about their overwhelming support for the school. These comments reflect the very positive partnerships that exist between school and parents and carers; this contributes significantly to the high quality welfare and education of their children. A very few comments identified areas of concern, which were supported by inspection findings, for example that occasionally children make less than good progress in lessons.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Francis Church of England Aided Primary School and Nursery 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 124 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 245 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	92	79	22	19	2	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	96	83	19	16	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	67	58	43	37	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	65	56	41	35	6	5	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	71	61	37	32	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	50	51	44	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	82	71	32	28	0	0	0	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)	68	59	39	34	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	68	59	39	34	6	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	67	58	42	34	5	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	66	57	41	36	6	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	73	63	35	35	3	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	87	76	25	22	3	3	0	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



7 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Francis Church of England Aided Primary School and Nursery,
Birmingham, B30 1LZ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed joining in with your lessons and worship, talking to you, hearing you sing and listening to you play in the wind band. Yours is a good school and, as a result, you make good progress in your learning. There are many good things about your school.

You behave very well, look after each other and tell us how much you enjoy school and all the exciting things you are able to do.

You attend very well, work hard in your lessons and are keen to do well.

All the adults in the school care a lot about you and make sure that you are safe and well supported.

You have lots of opportunities to keep active and healthy and you know well how to keep yourselves safe.

The adults who manage and run your school work hard to make sure you have the best opportunities to achieve well.

There are two things we have asked the school to do to make it even better. These are:

- to make sure that you all have tasks to do that challenge you to learn even more and that you and your teachers are clear about what you need to do next
- for teachers to look carefully at what happens in the subjects for which they have responsibility so that they know that you are all doing the best you can.

You can help by being making sure you know the learning objectives for each lesson and whether your work is good enough to meet the objectives.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Stafford

Lead inspector

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