

St Francis Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107332
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	360977
Inspection dates	2–3 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Katrina Gueli HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs M Friis
Headteacher	Mr D Copley
Date of previous school inspection	18 May 2009
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Introduction

When St Francis Catholic Primary School was inspected in May 2009, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school was inspected on three occasions. At the last monitoring inspection, the school was judged to be making satisfactory progress overall.

This inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed 13 lessons and 10 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with leaders, members of the governing body, pupils and representatives of Education Bradford. Inspectors also scrutinised documents, including those relating to data on pupils' current attainment and progress, recent national test results and the school's own monitoring of teaching and learning. Inspectors also looked at the findings of the parental and pupil surveys, conducted by the school in September 2010.

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

- To what extent has attainment risen and achievement been improved?
- Is teaching of a consistently good quality?
- Are teachers able to assess pupils' work accurately and use this information to build systematically on what pupils already know?
- Have leaders taken the action necessary to address weaknesses and improve the school's performance?

Information about the school

St Francis Catholic Primary is of average size for a primary school. The number of pupils on roll has reduced since the time of the last inspection, as a result of a planned revision to Catholic education in the locality. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average and only a few of these children speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and there are currently no pupils on roll with a statement of special educational needs. There has been a significant turnover of staff since the last inspection, including new middle and senior leadership appointments. Substantial school and classroom refurbishment has been undertaken, with a further extension to the school building due for completion in December 2010. The school has gained the Activemark, along with the Healthy School status and the Speaker's School Council award.

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

2

Main findings

The school has improved rapidly since the inspection of May 2009 and in accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The commitment of all staff, combined with good leadership, has ensured that pupils' past underachievement in Key Stages 1 and 2 has been addressed, and that the outstanding provision within the Early Years Foundation Stage has been sustained. All aspects of provision are now good and this has resulted in accelerated pupils' progress in all year groups. Consequently, pupils' current attainment has risen to be broadly in line with the national average. However, the school recognises that more still has to be done to increase the number of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in all subjects for progress to be securely good overall. Pupils make good progress in developing their personal skills and qualities. This is reflected in their kind and courteous behaviour around school, high attendance and their positive attitudes to learning in the classroom. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the majority are enthusiastic participants in the good range of extra-curricular opportunities the school provides.

A rigorous system to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school's work is in place. This has been used well by leaders to check that actions taken have the required impact and to inform planning for the next steps in improvement. Current priorities are appropriate because leaders, including members of the governing body, have a realistic view of the school's current strengths and weaknesses and a clear vision for the school's further development. The governing body supports the school well but rightly recognises that its ability to hold the school to account, although improved, needs to develop further. The school's ethos and mission statement 'together we are exploring our special gifts; together we are growing towards God' underpins the work of all those involved in the school. These elements have been a key factor in ensuring that equality of opportunity is promoted well and that the school is a happy, caring community where adults and pupils are mutually respectful. Partnerships to promote community cohesion more widely have been established but it is too soon to see the full impact of more recent developments.

The significant improvements in provision and pupils' achievement, combined with the effectiveness of leaders at all levels in swiftly tackling the weaknesses identified at the last inspection, confirm the school's good capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To increase the proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in all subjects by:
 - developing a wider range of challenging and creative opportunities across the curriculum to extend all learners

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- ensuring that those adults who support learning have the knowledge and expertise required to make a good contribution to pupils' progress in all lessons
- utilising good practice in assessment more frequently in science and other subjects.
- To increase the effectiveness with which community cohesion is promoted by extending and embedding actions across all three strands.
- To increase the effectiveness of the governing body by:
 - ensuring all governors have the confidence to hold leaders to account
 - ensuring policies relating to the safety and well-being of staff and pupils are revised to reflect best practice.

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

In most lessons, pupils are keen to be active participants in the learning, engage well and strive to produce their best work individually or in groups. They respond effectively to teachers' questions, showing a willingness and confidence to share their ideas or provide support for their peers. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with broadly expected skills. Despite pupils' recent good progress and these positive aspects of learning, pupils' progress, relative to their starting points, is satisfactory because of the significant historic underachievement that had to be addressed. Pupils feel safe in school and have a well-developed understanding of potential risks, for example those associated with the use of the internet, and they know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils willingly take up opportunities to make a positive contribution to the school and wider community. For example, all pupils have been involved in supporting initiatives, such as the 'Suitcase Library,' and in fund-raising for the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development. Their understanding and concern regarding local issues was recently demonstrated in a project led by the school council, which successfully tackled dangerous parking outside the school gates. Many pupils show a strong commitment to eating healthily and keeping fit. Consequently, activities such as the cooking club and street dance are heavily subscribed. Pupils' secure progress in developing their basic skills and their well-developed personal qualities ensure they are suitably prepared for the next steps in their education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2
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

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

How effective is the provision?

The large majority of teaching is now good because teachers are planning their lessons conscientiously, carefully matching tasks to pupils' abilities, and ensuring that activities are enjoyable and relevant to pupils' experiences. Lessons are conducted with a sense of urgency, with adults using skilled questioning to check and extend pupils' understanding. This good teaching has resulted in accelerated pupils' progress and gaps between pupils' expected and actual attainment have been closed. Staff have embraced new technology with enthusiasm. For example, they are using interactive whiteboards well to gain and maintain pupils' interest, and hand-held recording devices are helping pupils to capture and review their learning. Overall, teachers have a good grasp of the subjects they teach. While teaching assistants are confident when supporting the teaching of reading, their knowledge of and support for the teaching of mathematics are variable. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance. This is mostly successful but in a small minority of lessons seen, teachers were overambitious about what pupils would learn and their explanations were not always succinct. This was confusing to pupils and slowed their rate of learning.

The school has developed a wide range of assessment methods which are being used effectively to pinpoint gaps in pupils' knowledge, adjust teaching during lessons and to plan the next steps in pupils' learning. A particular strength is the introduction meetings to discuss pupils' progress which have helped class teachers to be more accurate in their

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assessment and to identify where additional support is needed. The manner in which pupils' learning in the core subjects of English and mathematics is assessed pinpoints progress well and is being used as an effective tool to drive up attainment. However, this good practice could be extended and embedded further in other subjects. The quality of the marking of pupils' work is consistently good throughout the school. Pupils say they understand and like the 'green for praise' and 'orange for next steps' system. Furthermore, they confirm that their targets and the feedback they receive on how to improve help them to make better progress in their learning.

The curriculum meets the needs of different learners well and targeted interventions are used effectively to accelerate pupils' progress. Enrichment experiences, including visits or visitors, are incorporated into each topic to contextualise the learning. These successfully increase pupils' motivation and promote their enjoyment. Additional specialist teaching ensures that pupils have high quality learning experiences in a range of curriculum subjects, including singing, dance, drama and guitar. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 enjoy a variety of extra-curricular activities which make a good contribution to their personal development and well-being. In addition, specific programmes are thoughtfully utilised to support identified groups to develop their self-esteem, and leadership or team working skills.

Staff know individual pupils and their families well and this helps to ensure that the school provides a welcoming environment for both children and their parents or carers. Pupils who are at risk of underachievement are well supported by school-based staff and the effective use of external agencies and partners. Examination of case studies clearly demonstrates that individuals with complex needs have received very good care and support to ensure that any barriers to learning and development have been removed. Pupils say that their concerns are listened to and quickly addressed. Transition arrangements for pupils entering or leaving the school are well-developed and the school's recent questionnaire confirms that parents and carers feel that the school helped their child to settle in well when they arrived. Similarly, transition between classes and key stages is underpinned by detailed discussion of individuals' academic and personal needs so that good quality care and support are assured.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has been instrumental in driving the school's improvement. He has sustained morale and successfully empowered other leaders and staff to work together to bring about the recent improvements in provision and outcomes. All staff share the headteacher's vision and are highly motivated and committed to raising standards and

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accelerating pupils' progress further. The negative impact of the turbulent staffing situation of autumn 2009 has been successfully addressed, with new appointments improving both teaching quality and leadership capacity. Existing staff have worked well with external partners, including Education Bradford colleagues, to develop their leadership skills and improve their classroom practice. Targets set are challenging, reflecting higher expectations of what pupils can achieve. Rigorous and frequent monitoring of the progress of individuals and groups is ensuring that underperformance is swiftly identified and addressed. Improvement planning is effective and informed by the findings of sharply focused evaluation. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities in relation to the health and well-being of staff, although policies need further refinement to reflect best practice. Systems to safeguard pupils are robust, records are well kept and information is shared or followed up as appropriate. There are good mechanisms in place to communicate with parents and carers and the school is responsive to their views. Parents and carers are involved in contributing to school development with the recently established parents' council taking a leading role in supporting the completion of the quiet courtyard and prayer garden. Regular sessions for parents and carers to help them support their child's learning are well attended and provide valuable information and resources.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children blossom during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage because of high quality teaching, excellent resources and very effective arrangements for their well-being. As a result of very good leadership and exceptional planning for both the indoor provision and outside, children make outstanding progress, with the majority attaining above the nationally expected levels in almost all areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. Children achieve exceptionally well in communication, language and literacy, in calculation,

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and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. From the moment children enter the classroom, they are full of confidence and eager to learn. They join in with their classmates, making sensible choices and taking advantage of all the exciting activities available. Children enjoy learning because adults work very hard to ensure that their experiences are of the highest quality. This was evident as children were exceptionally keen as they became 'fireworks'. In addition to having enormous fun they extended their vocabulary as they 'whizzed', 'banged' and 'whooshed' around the outdoor area and built on their mathematical understanding as they formed different shapes. Furthermore, they showed a very good understanding of keeping safe and healthy on bonfire night. Children's achievements are recorded meticulously and taken into account when planning the next stage of their learning. Links with parents, carers and other professionals contribute considerably to children's well-being. Parents and carers say workshops on, for example, reading and outdoor play, allow them to take an active part in their child's education. They particularly appreciate the high quality photographs of their child's progress and magical moments.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Questionnaires for parents and carers are not normally distributed by Ofsted for special measures monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Inspectors reviewed the findings of the recent parent and carer survey carried out by the school. The survey indicates that overall, parents have very positive views about how safe their child feels in school, their child's enjoyment of school, how well the school encourages their child to be healthy and pupils' behaviour overall. These findings concur with those of the inspectors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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 pupils' 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.



4 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Francis Catholic Primary School, Bradford, BD2 4ES

You may remember that I recently visited your school with another inspector. We would like to thank you for talking to us about your school and showing us your work.

Since May 2009, the school has really improved and no longer requires special measures because Mr Copley, other staff and the governors have worked really hard to help you make better progress in your learning. We found that teaching is good and the curriculum is interesting and carefully planned to meet your needs. Staff in school provide you with good care and support and this is helping you to develop into confident, independent learners and feel safe.

We were very impressed with the way you approach your work and how caring and polite you are to other children and adults in school. You are strongly committed to making a difference to your school and the wider community through extensive fund-raising, tackling local issues such as dangerous parking and taking on responsibilities in school. Your attendance is high and this is helping you to make the most of what the school provides. Many of you take part in extra activities beyond the school day and these add to your enjoyment and help you to keep fit and healthy.

Your achievement has improved but we have asked the school to help even more of you reach the higher Level 5 in English, mathematics and other subjects by the time you reach the end of Key Stage 2. You have some opportunities to learn about, and experience the diversity of your local area, Britain and the world but we found that this aspect of the school's work could be developed further.

I am sure that with your enthusiasm for learning and hard work the school will continue to improve.

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli

Her Majesty's Inspector

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