

# St Francis Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116402
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	290523
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Hilary Bonser

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	413
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs F Grove
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr S J Shepherd
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 January 2003
<b>School address</b>	Pilgrims Close Valley Park Chandler's Ford Eastleigh SO53 4ST
<b>Telephone number</b>	02380 271178
<b>Fax number</b>	02380 251988

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than many primary schools. The large majority of pupils come from relatively advantaged backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities has increased since the last inspection and is above average. The level of children's skills on entry to the school varies from year to year but is broadly average, with a small minority having speech and language difficulties. A small number of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, a very few of whom are at an early stage of learning English. The school has received several national awards since the last inspection, including the enhanced Healthy Schools' Award, Investors in People, the Activemark and gold Artsmark.

## 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 with a number of outstanding features that enables pupils of all abilities to achieve well. Parents and pupils justifiably hold the school in high regard. As one parent commented, 'I cannot praise the school enough and would recommend it to other parents.' Under the outstanding leadership of the headteacher, the school has continued to build on its earlier successes and has responded well to the issues from the previous inspection. In addition, pupils' personal development, the care and support provided for this and the curriculum have all improved further and are now outstanding.

Good improvements in the approaches to teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage, its curriculum and environment mean that children now do well in their reception year. There has been a successful focus across the whole school on improving the quality of writing. As a result, pupils' progress has accelerated in all year groups and standards are rising. A key factor has been the improvement in teaching and learning, which is now good across the school. Another is the increased rigour and scope in the tracking of pupils' progress. This is used effectively to identify at an early stage any pupils not making the expected progress towards the challenging targets that are set. Extra support is then quickly given.

The improvements since the last inspection have resulted in consistently above average standards in Year 6. Standards in Year 2 fell back to broadly average last year and remain so currently. This reflects a considerable increase in the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities in some year groups, where the majority of pupils still make good progress in relation to their previous attainment.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy the outstanding curriculum. The wide-ranging opportunities that it provides fully capture their interest. It has a very positive effect on their learning and motivation and contributes significantly to their good achievement. This is also a school where each pupil really counts. The excellent care and support for pupils' personal development is outstanding and provided in such a way that all pupils are fully included in school life. The excellent partnership with governors, parents, other schools and agencies also contributes significantly to pupils' very positive attitudes. Such strengths result in a happy atmosphere where pupils feel confident and keen to learn. 'My child has thrived in this environment,' summed up one parent.

The school is good at identifying its strengths, its areas for development and what is needed to remedy them. Teachers have used individual targets and precise marking very effectively to involve pupils fully in their learning and to help them know exactly what to do improve their writing. Although planned for, the school has not yet extended these strategies to other subjects. The improvements already made show that the school is well placed to make further progress.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Extend the good practice in assessment and target-setting in writing to mathematics and other subjects.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, the more able and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well in relation to their previous attainment.

Good teaching helps the majority of children to reach or exceed the expected learning goals by the end of their reception year and to make good progress. In Years 1 to 6, many boys and girls of all abilities continue to do well, as a result of close attention to individual needs.

Standards are above average overall. In the current Year 6 they are exceptionally high, showing good progress from the above average performance in their Year 2 national tests. The broadly average standards in Year 2 represent good achievement for pupils in relation to their individual starting points. The school has successfully raised standards in writing towards those in reading through a combination of strategies, including careful moderation of pupils' work and using every opportunity across the curriculum for pupils to practise their skills. The use of individual targets has proved particularly effective and the school plans to introduce these in other subjects to further increase the rate of pupils' progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. The successful emphasis the school places on its Christian ethos and on all aspects of pupils' development is seen in their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. Their very positive attitudes are reflected in the above average attendance. One pupil said: 'Teachers are good at making you work harder, so you improve'. Pupils greatly enjoy school, helped by the excellent relationships with each other and all staff. Pupils contribute to school life very well through the school council. They take on these and other responsibilities around the school with enthusiasm. Pupils say they feel personally safe at school because bullying is rare and they are confident in the quality of adult supervision and security of the premises. They are very well aware of what to do to enjoy a healthy lifestyle and are keen to take part in the many sporting activities. They have frequent opportunities in lessons to work together or independently and to make choices and decisions. This, together with the good level of their literacy, numeracy and information technology skills, prepares them very well for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good overall. This now includes the Foundation Stage as a result of effective action since the last inspection. Lessons are clearly planned, well structured and effectively supported by the use of interactive whiteboards and information communication technology (ICT). Teachers' subject knowledge is good and lessons are engaging and often challenging. Pupils behave very well and their positive attitudes boost the impact of the teaching. Consequently, they make good progress. They clearly enjoy their lessons, co-operate effectively and respond positively to the varied tasks presented to them. In a good literacy lesson in Year 6, pupils demonstrated good knowledge of the life and times of Sir Francis Drake and wrote convincing accounts of life aboard the Golden Hinde. Their learning was further improved by the use of good improvised drama, which helped them to extend their writing to describe emotions effectively. Skilled teaching assistants are very effective at supporting small groups of pupils and contribute greatly to the good progress made by pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Teachers' marking and assessments are used well to track pupils' progress,

particularly in writing, but do not consistently provide pupils with advice on how to take the next step in their learning in other subject areas.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The outstanding curriculum makes a very significant contribution to pupils' achievement and to all aspects of their personal development. The purposeful links between subjects are enriched by an excellent variety of additional activities. These provide pupils with a relevant, stimulating approach to learning. This was illustrated in the stories written by Year 4 pupils. From these they made books, using knowledge and skills gained in design and technology, ICT and English; they then shared their books with Year 2 pupils. Careful planning takes very good account of pupils' differing needs and abilities, including gifted and talented pupils, those with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language. It means that all pupils are fully included in lessons and are very keen to learn. There is now a good balance of well-planned activities in the Foundation Stage. The high quality of the personal, health and social elements of the curriculum is recognised in the school's enhanced Healthy Schools' Award. These aspects promote the life skills very successfully that will enable pupils to become responsible members of their communities. Other national awards attest to the breadth and quality of the sporting and arts opportunities for pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Care, guidance and support are good, with outstanding aspects. All staff know the pupils and their individual needs very well. The care and support given is highly effective in promoting pupils' personal development and good achievement and greatly appreciated by parents and pupils alike. 'The staff will always go that extra mile to help you,' explained one parent. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning or behavioural difficulties are identified at an early stage and very good provision and a close partnership with parents and external agencies helps them to do well. The school also provides well for more able pupils. The school has robust health and safety procedures to ensure compliance with child protection and other requirements. Academic guidance is good overall. However the individual target-setting and high quality marking that has proved very effective in increasing pupils' progress in writing has not yet been extended to other subjects.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good and contribute positively to the good progress made by all pupils. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has brought about sustained and significant improvements. He has set a clear and comprehensive vision for the school that is centred on the development of the whole child. As one pupil said 'He cares for us all'. He is supported well by an effective senior leadership team and the school's strategic plan sets high expectations of all staff and pupils. Staff training is improving teaching steadily. Subject leadership is good and there is a shared commitment to improving standards, achievement and pupils' personal development. Subject leaders are involved in the monitoring of teachers' planning, pupils' work and in tracking progress over time. They do not directly monitor the quality of teaching through lesson observations. Consequently, they do not have a

comprehensive view of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects. Governors support and contribute to the work of the school effectively, especially through their astute financial management. This has provided enhanced staffing to help ensure that initiatives to raise standards are successful as well as significant improvements to the learning environment.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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 disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

27 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Francis Church of England Primary School, Eastleigh, SO53 4ST

I am writing to let you know what we found out when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We really enjoyed seeing you at work and at playtimes and talking to you. There are many things we like about your good school.

We liked these the most:

- your behaviour is excellent, you work hard, enjoy school very much and make good progress in your work
- your headteacher runs the school very well indeed
- the school looks after you very carefully and all of the adults connected with it do all they can to help you
- the school provides many interesting and exciting things for you to do
- you understand the importance of eating the right things and taking plenty of exercise
- we agree with you that your teachers are good at making lessons interesting and helping you to improve.

We have asked your teachers to help you make even faster progress in mathematics and other subjects by using individual targets like those you have for writing.

Thank you again

Yours sincerely

Hilary Bonser

Lead inspector