

Saint Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100494
Local Authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	335555
Inspection dates	11–12 May 2010
Reporting inspector	John Laver

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	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Edwin Dooley
Headteacher	P Rincon
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. During the inspection 22 lessons were observed and 13 teachers were seen. Inspectors observed the school's work, and held meetings with pupils, staff, parents and carers and governors. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including assessment data on pupils' current progress, the school improvement plan, minutes of the governing body and reports by the School Improvement Partner and local authority. Inspectors analysed 66 questionnaires from parents and carers, 69 pupil questionnaires and 8 staff questionnaires.

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

- the relative underachievement of a small group of boys, particularly in English, and investigated how effectively the school is addressing this issue
- the extent to which teachers are using assessment, including pupil targets, as a means of further improving teaching and the quality of learning
- the extent to which identified strengths in pupils' personal development are supporting academic success in all areas of the curriculum, but particularly in the core subjects of English and mathematics.

Information about the school

Well over half the pupils in this larger-than-average primary school are from minority ethnic backgrounds, and over half join the school at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which include learning, behavioural and emotional needs, is below average. The school runs a nursery and makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in two Reception classes. The headteacher is currently seconded for part of the week to run another school in the local authority. The school holds several awards, including Activemark, and has Healthy Schools status. It is a regional centre for the development of modern foreign languages in primary schools and the school attracts visits from a wide range of educationalists for its work in mathematics and curriculum development.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Saint Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School provides an outstanding standard of education. It succeeds in enabling pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds to make outstanding progress in acquiring a range of skills and knowledge to a high standard. At the same time, the school ensures outstanding personal development, as pupils work and socialise together in a nurturing environment which is greatly appreciated by pupils and their parents and carers alike. Typical was the comment of a parent that, 'This is an inspirational school, an inclusive and life-enhancing school; one which offers the local and wider community a model of what can be achieved if you dare to dream and, most importantly, strive to realise that dream.' Another asserted that, 'This is a wonderful beacon of hope and opportunity for the community's children.'

Most children join the school with levels of skills and knowledge below those typical for their age, and well below in communication, language and literacy skills. They leave the school with standards, especially in English and mathematics, significantly above the national average for eleven-year-olds. The outstanding rate of progress and high quality of learning are due to a number of factors. Teaching is outstanding, characterised by pace, challenge and imaginative use of stimulating resources. Teachers make skilful use of pupil targets and other forms of assessment, all of which promote rapid learning of all groups of pupils. The progress is also due to the excellent attitudes which nearly all pupils bring to learning in the classroom and beyond the school. Not least, it is due to the commitment and skill of the leadership team and staff in identifying and appropriately supporting the small minority of potentially underachieving or vulnerable pupils. A very few older boys, some with particular learning needs, do not progress at the same rapid rate as the overwhelming majority of pupils, mainly because they attend school much less regularly than the rest.

There is a strong 'family' ethos and very good support systems in place to ensure that pupils feel very safe and secure in school. A particular strength is the stimulating learning environment, characterised by very high-quality displays and artefacts which include scientific objects, photographs and art work, and which make the school an exciting place to be in. It means that learning comes alive for adults as well as pupils. At the same time, as a parent commented, 'A peaceful, calm ambience has been created which helps easily excitable and distracted children feel secure and focused.' Pupils behave excellently, giving the school a very positive profile in the community. A very creative curriculum builds on the well-developed literacy and numeracy skills to further children's experiences in a range of topics which encourage independence, questioning and activity-based learning.

The school is prominent as a centre of educational excellence, largely due to the

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headteacher's high expectations and infectious enthusiasm. It is an outward-looking community. The school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion by ensuring that pupils do not just contribute to their local community but develop links and an excellent understanding of life in other parts of the United Kingdom and the global community. An experienced, stable staff and governing body share the headteacher's vision and are committed to maintain and build on the already outstanding achievements. This process is furthered by rigorous monitoring, accurate self-evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development, and the resulting planning. These strengths, combined with an impressive record of success over time, mean that the school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress and raise the attainment of the very small minority of older boys who do not achieve as well as other pupils; in particular, by encouraging more support from their parents and carers to ensure that they attend regularly.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils make outstanding progress by the end of Year 6. Recent national test results showed standards well above average, particularly in English and mathematics, and these high standards were also evident during the inspection. Potentially underachieving or vulnerable pupils are quickly identified and given well-targeted support, often in the classroom, by skilled teaching assistants. The excellent support for those at an early stage of learning English and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that these pupils progress at the same rapid rate as other pupils. Differences between the standards and progress of boys and girls, and between pupils from different ethnic groups, are not significant. More able pupils make outstanding progress because they are given appropriately challenging opportunities, as seen for example in an accelerated mathematics class for older pupils. Pupils behave outstandingly, and enjoy helping their peers, for example in the school parliament; or they support the local community by engaging in activities such as music events or helping senior citizens. Pupils have a very well-developed awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They talk knowledgeably about different types of food, enjoy working on the school farm and take part in a wide range of sports activities. Attendance levels are close to average. They are not higher because, for compassionate reasons, the school allows some pupils extended leave of absence to visit relatives on other continents. However, this does not have a negative impact on these pupils' progress over time. In addition, a very small number of older boys do not attend well, and this does affect their progress. In addition to having well-developed skills in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology, almost all pupils develop a high level of reasoning, enquiry and enterprise skills, and so are very well prepared for the next phase of education as well as life generally. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils benefit from extensive opportunities to reflect on issues such as the importance of

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personal responsibility. They also benefit from a great range of opportunities in music, the arts and school visits, as well as from contact with those from different cultural backgrounds and through links with other schools. All these opportunities give pupils an outstanding start on the road to becoming rounded and well-integrated citizens.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The teaching is of a consistently high quality, which is the most significant reason for pupils' outstanding progress. The best lessons are characterised by a very good match of activities and resources to the needs of pupils with a range of abilities and sometimes different rates of language development. Teachers encourage pupils to learn actively, seen for example when younger pupils discussed with each other the features of good story telling, and all were thoroughly engaged in the task. Pupils are encouraged to contribute their ideas, and they listen very well to each other. Teaching assistants are deployed well, helping pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities keep pace with the rest. Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations, for example in the presentation of their work. Pupils know their targets, used very well to show them how

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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to move to the next level of learning. Work is marked constructively, and pupils also assess their own progress. They are very enthusiastic about the imaginative curriculum, which combines different strands of learning in well-planned and very well-resourced topics such as 'Our place in space' and 'Local London.' Specialist teaching of Spanish and music throughout the school yields impressive results. The curriculum is further enriched by a wide range of popular activities, including residential trips to Spain and Ironbridge. Sport has a high profile, and pupils compete successfully in several competitions. The provision for pupils at an early stage of learning English is excellent, enabling these pupils to fully engage in, and benefit from, the exciting learning opportunities which are such a feature of the school. There are strong links with outside agencies, and the successful integration of pupils from diverse backgrounds ensures a very caring environment which underpins the outstanding learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The sustained success of the school is due to many factors, and a key one is the exceptional quality of the leadership and management at all levels. The leaders' and managers' enthusiasm is infectious and successfully communicated to staff, governors, pupils, parents and carers. There is rigorous monitoring and accurate self-evaluation, whilst planning is appropriately ambitious. The school is firmly committed to equality of opportunity, very evident in the outcomes for all groups of pupils, and there is no discrimination. Everyone is able to play a full part in the life of the school and, as a parent commented, pupils are able to 'discover how much they have to offer to each other'. There are good links with other schools which, for example, ensure good transition for pupils to the next phase of education. Parents and carers are strongly involved in their children's learning, for example through a programme of workshops and participation in events such as international days and book fairs. Safeguarding procedures are very robust; pupils and staff are fully aware of safety aspects such as site security and use of computers. Governors and staff are fully aware of the appropriate procedures. Parents and carers are encouraged to contribute to the school through activities such as reading stories in community languages and sharing their cultural experiences. This is just one way in which the school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. Other examples, whereby pupils' perspectives are widened, include hosting educational visits from other parts of the United Kingdom and

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developing overseas links such as those with schools in Spain.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

The levels of skill and knowledge of children joining the school are often below expectations for those typical of their age. Following an exceptional start in the Nursery, children make outstanding progress overall in relation to their starting points in most areas of learning. Progress in reading and writing is slower, particularly for boys, but is still good, so that children are well prepared for the move to Year 1. Children love the range of activities, and play a dynamic role in their own learning as they quickly develop high levels of independence, curiosity, imagination and perseverance, both when working with adults and when choosing their own activities. The outstanding teaching leads to children having extremely positive relationships with adults, high levels of self-discipline and harmonious relationships, very evident in the way in which the children from different cultural backgrounds engage with each other. Leadership and management are outstanding. Curriculum planning ensures a wealth of learning experiences which meet the needs of all children and take account of their personal interests. Rigorous assessments enable staff to monitor each child's progress carefully and identify appropriate further learning opportunities. The free flow of activities and collaborative organisation between the two Reception classes, the Nursery and Year 1 are particularly effective in ensuring good access to resources and the expertise of staff, whilst also giving the children a strong sense of continuity. Children feel very well cared for and secure. Parents and carers greatly appreciate these features and the school's

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efforts to involve them in their own learning.

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

A very large majority of parents and carers are greatly appreciative of all aspects of the education provided by the school. They praise the high academic standards and rate of progress achieved by their children, and also the high quality of care and support which ensure that their children feel very safe and greatly enjoy coming to school, both for the lessons and the exciting range of enrichment activities. Almost all parents and carers feel that their children are well taught and that the school meets all their needs well. A few parents and carers do not believe that the school handles the few occasions of inappropriate behaviour well, and a few are concerned that the headteacher is frequently away from school fulfilling commitments in another school, as arranged with the local authority. The inspection team acknowledges the concerns, but judges that behaviour is one of the many strengths of the school, and contributes significantly to it being a very safe, caring and supportive environment. Inspectors also believe that the school's very strong and stable leadership team ensures that the headteacher's work at another school does not have a detrimental impact on the outstanding provision and effectiveness of the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Saint Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary 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 66 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 330 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	64	22	33	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	64	21	31	2	3	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	43	65	23	35	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	62	21	32	2	3	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	45	68	20	30	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	62	23	35	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	52	26	39	3	5	1	2
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)	33	50	26	39	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	36	55	24	36	4	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	53	23	35	8	12	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	42	29	44	5	8	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	38	57	21	32	6	9	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	69	17	26	3	5	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.



13 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Saint Francis of Assisi Catholic Primary School, London W11 4BJ

Thank you being so polite and welcoming when we visited your school recently. We know that you love coming to school. The school looks after you very well and keeps you safe, and all of you get on very well with each other. You all get the same opportunities to do well and take a full part in school life.

Your school provides you with an outstanding level of education. Most of you make more progress than children in many other schools do. This is because your teachers teach you really well. They mark your work carefully and give you targets which help you know how well you are doing and how you can improve. You also told us how much you enjoy your lessons, particularly when you do interesting projects like 'Our place in space'. The school visits are very popular, such as the trip to Spain and visits to London theatres and museums. You also get good opportunities in sport, music and a whole range of activities. You behave very well and are good ambassadors for your school, because you are good at helping other people and you welcome lots of visitors into your school. Your headteacher is an outstanding leader and all staff make sure that you have the best opportunities before you move elsewhere at the age of eleven. We were also very impressed by how much you understand, not just about the local area, but also about what life is like for people in other parts of Britain, and what people believe in and how they live in other parts of the world.

If you continue to work hard, you will also continue to make excellent progress. In order that all of you can reach the highest standards, we have also asked that:

- the school improves the attendance of a few older boys who do not come to school regularly, so they can get better results in English and mathematics.

Once again, thank you for your welcome and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Laver

Lead inspector

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