

Francis Baily Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109831
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	356637
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Ronald Hall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	527
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Ardagh-Walter
Headteacher	Barbara Hunter
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 23 lessons, taught by 21 teachers. Meetings and discussions were held with members of staff, two members of the governing body including the chair, parents, carers and pupils. Inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including that related to safeguarding governing body minutes, assessment data and curriculum plans.

Questionnaires from 174 parents and carers were scrutinised as well as those from pupils and staff. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The attainment of pupils in mathematics and especially that of girls.
- Whether teaching is of a consistently high enough standard to raise attainment and develop pupils' independent learning skills.
- Whether the curriculum, as a whole, is varied and exciting to ensure that pupils are highly motivated to learn and especially in mathematics.

Information about the school

Francis Baily Primary School is a larger than average primary school. In September 2008 a new headteacher was appointed and since that time the senior leadership has undergone major changes. Most of its pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion from minority ethnic groups is similar to that found nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has several awards such as the Activemark and Healthy School status. There is a before- and after-school club on the same site, which are managed by the governing body and were included in this inspection.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good, and rapidly improving school that has changed significantly since the previous inspection. Pupils make good progress and, although broadly average, pupils' attainment has risen consistently in the last two years, particularly in English. This demonstrates the major success of the headteacher's ambition to raise the expectations of staff, pupils, parents and carers. The quality of teaching has improved and it is now consistently good throughout the school. Good teaching, teamwork and effective provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, for example, eliminate underachievement and, consequently, ensure children get off to a good start in their education. The before- and after-school clubs enhance the school's provision. Staff in the clubs are well qualified and ensure the health and welfare of all pupils attending. The leaders and managers of the school monitor it rigorously, as do the governing body to ensure the best possible standards.

Pupils are proud of their school. When asked what they would like changed, if they could, a typical response from a pupil was, 'stay at Francis Baily always'. Behaviour is good, pupils are polite and they all share a common caring ethos. Pupils are fully involved within the local community and the school council is an active participant in school improvement. Pupils understand that they have to work really hard. There have been major changes to the mathematics teaching and curriculum and these are beginning to have the desired effect of raising attainment, particularly for girls. As one pair of pupils commented, 'We really enjoy this practical way of working, it makes us think.' Pupils can talk about their targets and how they can improve. This has helped more pupils to reach the expected Level 4 at the end of Year 6 in both English and mathematics. The number of those reaching the higher Level 5 in English is above average but lower in mathematics. This is partly due to some inconsistency in the teaching of mathematics across the school and due to more-able pupils are not always challenged enough in their learning. Progress in other subjects has improved through better provision, the introduction of a new curriculum and improved teaching methods. More attention on real-life experiences and cross-curricular teaching is helping pupils see a relevance to their learning and so make good links between different subjects. One example of this is the frequent use of English skills to help develop and extend writing in other subjects.

The school is a very caring and cohesive community which has built highly effective partnerships locally and further afield. The care, guidance and support of pupils are good, as is the safeguarding of pupils. Due to this, there is a noticeably positive and welcoming atmosphere throughout the school, and pupils feel safe while at school.

The headteacher has the overwhelming support of the whole school community. She has engendered a common sense of purpose and, along with the increasingly strong support of other leaders, is driving forward a whole range of successful initiatives. In a short time,

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leaders have turned around the progress of pupils, have ensured that teaching builds upon what has gone before and set up a strong and effective process of whole-school evaluation. The rapid improvement in pupils' progress and attainment, the raising of self-esteem of the school community and the consistency of provision, all point to a school with a good capacity for sustained and rapid improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - improving teaching and learning so that 90% of teaching is good or better by September 2012
 - ensuring all teachers consistently match the work provided to the needs and abilities of all the pupils in their class.
 - Ensuring more-able pupils are consistently set challenging work in all classes
 - ensuring the active involvement of girls in mathematics.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The latest unvalidated national test results and school data demonstrate a sustained improvement, maintaining the turnaround since 2009. The attainment of pupils presently in Year 6 shows a further improvement, particularly in English and in mathematics but in this subject it is not as rapid. Some teachers ensure girls play an active part in mathematics lessons, but in other classes they are not involved enough and contribute less than the boys. By Year 6, pupils have at least broadly average attainment with a higher proportion reaching above the national average level in English. In lessons, most pupils can demonstrate good understanding of grammar conventions, calculation and have good information and communication technology skills. However, in the small number of lessons where girls are not fully engaged in mathematics their skills are not as well developed.

The school concluded that pupils previously had lacked independent learning skills. Consequently, it has developed a new curriculum and a wider range of teaching styles which present pupils with opportunities to develop these skills on a daily basis. For example, in one good lesson, young pupils were using their skills to compare and contrast major religions. High quality intervention means that underachievement is picked up earlier and pupils moved on at increased rates. From low starting points pupils make good progress throughout the school to ensure attainment at the end of Year 6 is generally average and above average in English. Consequently, achievement is good.

Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is equally effective. These pupils make similar levels of progress to their classmates. Pupils who start school with little or no English are quickly able to communicate confidently with their friends and teachers. Boys and girls now achieve equally well. Most more-able pupils make good progress, but this is less consistent than for other groups.

Pupils' personal development is a particular strength and pupils enjoy coming to school; hence pupils' attendance is high. This aspect is further supported in the before- and after-school club, where pupils' active involvement is a real strength. Pupils talk with understanding and empathy about different nationalities within the school and what they

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think of the school in general. In discussion, for example, they had an interesting exchange about the changes in the curriculum, which clearly demonstrated they had the same views of the school as the senior leadership team.

In lessons, there are good levels of concentration and pupils work extremely well together. They are especially tolerant of those who perhaps take longer to understand a concept and need more help, and often try to help them with their work. For example, when one pupil got distressed during a lesson, others quickly and sensibly helped him get over the problem and the teacher's sympathetic approach provided an excellent role model. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy lifestyle, a fact supported by the school's national awards and which can be seen in their choices, for instance, in their lunchboxes. The combination of good academic and personal development, along with an increasing opportunity to use the skills that have been acquired previously, is preparing pupils well for their future schooling.

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	3
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	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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
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 quality of teaching is generally good. Common strengths include the quality of verbal feedback and the use of assessment opportunities in the classroom through effective questioning to move pupils' learning forward. Planning usually caters well for different abilities and in these lessons pupils make rapid progress. However, in a few classes there is a mismatch of work, most often for the more-able pupils. The strong whole-school

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assessment has been used well to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving. This has been translated into successful pupils' progress meetings. Hence, pupils are able to talk confidently about how to move to the next level and about what is on their target sheets. This is significantly better in English, where it has been the main focus for the last year, than in mathematics.

As pupils' attainment has risen, so the school has started to redevelop the curriculum to make it more exciting and relevant. This has been particularly successful in mathematics, where teaching is much more practical based. While this is still 'work in progress', there are many added extras such as regular visits to other schools and good sports partnerships, art, drama and music. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the many clubs and activities they are involved in and the quality of the specialist who teaches them.

The good procedures to ensure pupils are kept safe and supported are valued by pupils, parents and carers, who fully endorsed this in the questionnaires. There are close links with family liaison and a wide range of other specialist agencies.

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 the driving force behind the rapid and successful pace of change in the school. Her ambitious programme of initiatives, successfully achieved in conjunction with the middle managers and governors, have made a significant difference to the outcomes for pupils. For example, although efforts are not being relaxed, since the previous inspection the school has closed the gap between the performance of boys and girls. Senior and middle leaders have been given the opportunity to take more responsibility and so engage effectively in the improvement process, although their role in evaluating the quality of teaching and learning has not as yet had time to impact fully and is not embedded across all subject areas. The school is addressing this. The school has a pride in itself and all staff fully support the drive to improve; a fact supported by the extremely positive return in staff questionnaires. All leaders, staff and even pupils have a clear view about what has worked and what still needs doing. To aid the process of improvement, partnerships have been used effectively to develop the provision and outcomes for pupils.

Monitoring is effective, although much of this has been done in the recent past just by the senior leaders. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities and has a good understanding of its role. With realistic reports from senior staff, it is able to gain a good understanding of what has been achieved and to help move the school forward. It takes

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the initiative in leading some areas, such as, improvements in information and communication technology provision within the school.

The good assessment data show that all pupils are encouraged to perform at their best so that there are effective processes to ensure equality of opportunity for all and no evidence of any discrimination. This includes the positive procedures to ensure pupils are safeguarded. Procedures are robust and rigorous, with regular health and safety audits and the checking of suitability of personnel. The impact of the curriculum in developing pupils' understanding of the diversity of local, national and global cultures is embedded well. The audit and evaluation show that there are many opportunities to interact with local schools and community groups.

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	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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The level of language development of children joining the school in the Reception class is significantly below that expected for their age. Early and accurate assessments are used to plan for everyone's learning needs so that children settle in quickly and, after only a short period of time, are working at levels much closer to those expected. This is due to consistently good teaching and provision in terms of resources. Nevertheless, there is still a wide range of ability from those who are reading simple sentences to some who have not gained an understanding of the link between speaking, reading and writing. Children behave extremely well and are enthusiastic to get on with their learning. They have good social skills and play well together, either on their own or in small groups, and make sensible choices.

There have been significant improvements over recent times in the provision and outcomes of children. The staff have created a highly exciting and stimulating environment ensuring that all areas of learning have the same priority. Displays encourage

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children to learn. The outdoor area is exemplary, providing ample opportunities for physical and other activities. There is a fluid use of the indoor and outside areas providing one continuous classroom regardless of the weather. During lessons, adults intervene skilfully to guide children into learning new things, such as learning about the world and wider community.

The skills and knowledge of the newly formed leadership partnership, combined with a clear vision for future development, have improved the provision. Effective training of staff has resulted in a skilled and well qualified team who supports and challenges children's progress at every opportunity. The staff's realistic evaluation rightly acknowledges it is still early days and that all the new procedures, systems and curricular opportunities will take a little time to have the fullest effect on the already good progress of pupils.

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

Parents and carers are positive about the school and how, in a short period of time, there have been so many improvements. Almost all replies state that they are happy with their child's experience at school. They are especially pleased with the new curriculum, which they feel has made a significant difference to the learning of the pupils. There is a small minority who feel that the school does not deal well with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and around the school, discussed with pupils and staff and scrutinised behavioural records. Inspection evidence endorses the views of the majority of parents and carers. Others feel communication with the school is an issue. This was also followed up. The school also provides parents and carers with a wide range of information on a regular basis, as well as having robust plans in place to extend this further through their website and other means.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Francis Baily 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 174 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 527 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	82	47	85	49	5	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	89	51	80	46	5	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	38	22	112	64	21	12	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	28	101	58	20	11	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	57	33	111	64	4	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	29	96	55	24	14	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	26	118	68	9	5	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)	60	34	100	57	7	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	28	103	59	18	10	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	17	90	52	33	19	16	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	24	101	58	19	11	5	3
The school is led and managed effectively	47	27	98	56	21	12	4	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	34	102	59	9	5	1	1

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 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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



10 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Francis Baily Primary School, Thatcham RG19 4GG

Thank you for making our time at Francis Baily so enjoyable. You will not be surprised to hear that we have said that you are at a good, and rapidly improving, school. This is something you should be very proud of since you have helped make it what it is. Your behaviour is good and you work extremely well together. This ensures that everybody is safe and well cared for, and that you work in a calm and supportive atmosphere. The following are a few things which we have highlighted.

- You get a really good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage which is giving those children there now a good start to their education. Everybody else makes good progress and is working at levels appropriate for their age. Results in national tests are rising so you all have a lot to live up to, especially those of you capable of achieving above Level 4.
- You are generally taught well and the curriculum has made learning more enjoyable. All staff have the desire and ability to make sure you fulfil your potential. They make lessons interesting and exciting, and have a lot of plans to make this even better in all subjects.
- All the staff have worked hard to make things better at your school but there should be a special mention for how well your school has improved in the last year.

To make your school one of the best, we have suggested ways in which the school could be improved:

- for teachers to raise your attainment further, and especially in mathematics, by improving lessons and ensuring that girls are fully involved.
- for teachers to match the work they set to all your needs and particularly to those of you who learn quickly.

We know that you wish to be involved in improving your school further, so keep making suggestions to your teachers on how your school can be improved.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Hall

Lead inspector

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