

St Francis' Catholic Primary School

Maryland Park, Stratford, London E15 1HB

Inspection dates

22–23 November 2016

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Outstanding leadership and management have enabled the school to make very rapid progress over the last three years.
- The inspirational headteacher has provided a very clear and non-negotiable plan for school improvement.
- The very strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural ethos of the school is evident in all its work.
- The leaders and governors are having a very positive impact on teaching and the pupils' outcomes. These aspects of the school's work are improving rapidly.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Teachers provide good-quality, individual feedback to pupils on how to improve their work, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- The school provides outstanding support for pupils' personal development and welfare.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are exceptionally courteous and very keen to learn. Their rates of attendance are high.
- Pupils feel very safe at school and are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe.
- Pupils' outcomes are good. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and attainment is rising across the curriculum.
- Provision for children in the early years provision is outstanding. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make excellent progress in all areas of learning.
- In Years 1 to 6, teachers do not always have high enough expectations for pupils' work in science and topic work.
- Teachers do not consistently adapt work within a lesson when pupils are stuck or are ready to move on to a more difficult task.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers have equally high expectations for the quality of pupils' work in science and topic work.
- Consistently make better use of information on how well pupils are doing during lessons, and adapt tasks when pupils become stuck or are ready for more difficult work.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leaders and governors have exceptionally high expectations and aspirations for the staff and pupils at the school. They are unrelenting in their drive to develop teaching and learning so that all pupils can succeed across the curriculum. The school is improving rapidly and leaders have brought the school from special measures to being good in just three years.
- The leaders have been very well supported by the determined and highly skilful headteacher. Governors and leaders at all levels are supported in taking responsibility for various aspects of school improvement. The pupils' welfare and academic success are at the heart of all school planning.
- Leaders have a clear understanding of what remains to be done to make the school outstanding in the future.
- Performance management and the monitoring of teaching are very rigorous. Leaders set clear targets for members of staff and make sure that training is sharply focused on what will improve the outcomes of pupils.
- The additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Resources and support packages are tailored to the pupils' individual needs, including the most able. There is little difference between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and others.
- Funding for special educational needs is used well. The new leaders are monitoring the learning of these pupils closely. These pupils do well over time, but leaders are aware that there are a few occasions when they are given work that is too difficult.
- The sports funding is used effectively to pay for after-school clubs and access to local competitions. During the inspection, pupils improved their skills in passing the ball to each other. They demonstrated very good social skills when playing basketball.
- Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for life in modern Britain. During 'Black History Month' they carry out in-depth studies of influential people. They are very proud of their own patron saint, St Francis, and know why he is important to their faith. They understand the values within the school mission statement, 'Peace, Love and Knowledge'.
- The curriculum is constantly being refined so that it will provide the pupils with the best possible education. There has been a necessary emphasis on the promotion of reading, writing and mathematics over the last three years, but not to the exclusion of other subjects. Pupils take part in a wide range of additional activities such as clubs and sporting events and cover a breadth of themes in science and topic work. Leaders are aware that pupils are not consistently being challenged well enough in their work in these subjects, and that this is the next area for school improvement.
- Parents are positive about the work of the school. They typically make positive comments such as 'teachers are welcoming and helpful' and 'the children are motivated and disciplined'.

Governance of the school

- Governance is highly effective in supporting and challenging other leaders at the school.
- Governance has developed very well since the previous inspection.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the work of the school and clear about what works well and what remains to be done.
- They play an important role in school development planning and in monitoring improvements.
- They take part in robust discussions about why certain pupils may not have done well enough.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have established a calm and secure environment that enables pupils to feel very safe and to keep safe.
- There are clear policies to support the pupils' safety and welfare and these procedures are followed effectively.
- All staff are kept up to date in their training, including on how to safeguard the pupils against radicalisation. They are checked for suitability for working in school.
- Close links between home and school ensure that pupils are very well supported in safeguarding matters. External agencies are involved when needed and any referrals are timely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment have improved since the previous inspection and are continuing to improve. Teachers reflect on their own practice, respond well to advice from leaders and are keen to receive further training when needed.
- They have a clear picture of how well pupils in their classes are doing because they check learning frequently. They promote key vocabulary well, supporting pupils in their understanding of meanings of words.
- Feedback and guidance for pupils on how they can improve their work is set out clearly. Teachers follow the school marking policy, particularly in literacy and mathematics. Helpful advice in these subjects is well received and followed up by the pupils in subsequent lessons. Advice is used less well in science and topic work in some classes.
- Pupils at risk of falling behind in their learning take part in successful intervention courses that boost their learning and enable them to catch up with their peers. Teachers are generally quick to give additional explanations when they see that pupils have not understood their tasks.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and form good relationships with them. The positive behaviour policy encourages pupils to behave well. Pupils are keen to move up the levels on the good behaviour charts.

- Teachers plan well for the needs of differing groups in each class, including the most able. They provide pupils with a good level of challenge most of the time. While work is mostly matched well to the pupils' levels of ability in reading, writing and mathematics, it is less well developed in science and topic work. Occasionally, teachers' expectations for what pupils can achieve in these subjects are not high enough and pupils make avoidable errors or do not complete hard enough work.
- There are occasions in some lessons when teachers do not adjust work quickly enough. When this happens, work is either too hard or not hard enough for some of the pupils. For example, in a few lessons pupils sit and wait for others to catch up before starting the next piece of work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are very clear about the importance of a good education. They know that with the right attitude towards learning they will be successful. They are very confident and have high aspirations for what they might do when they leave school.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to develop well emotionally and physically. For example, at playtime the pupil play leaders organise team games to encourage cooperation and to help keep pupils active.
- Pupils feel very safe at school and are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe. They learn the importance of staying safe when using the internet and during 'Safer Internet' week.
- Pupils say that they feel free from bullying of any kind. On the rare occasion when it occurs, they know that a member of staff will support them if they are unable to resolve the conflict themselves. During anti-bullying week, they share important messages about why bullying is wrong through various texts, posters and drama.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Members of staff, parents and pupils all agree that behaviour at the school is consistently strong over time.
- Pupils are exceptionally polite and helpful. For example, they are very keen to hold doors open for others and to help others through various charities.
- Pupils are respectful of the beliefs and values of others. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 showed great respect for valued artefacts such as a baptismal gown and certificate.
- Pupils enjoy learning and encourage each other in their work. They support each other very well when working in pairs or small groups.
- The school has very clear, positive rules about how pupils should behave. As a result, behaviour has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils move around the school site in an orderly fashion and instances of poor behaviour have reduced dramatically over the last two years.
- Rates of attendance are improving all the time and are already high compared with

other schools. There have been no recent cases of persistent absence and pupils arrive at school punctually.

- Pupils are very proud that they can represent their school in the local area by wearing their smart new blazers.
- Levels of disruption in lessons are extremely low. Pupils listen attentively in almost all lessons. Very occasionally, they continue to write when they have been asked to listen to the teacher or call out answers. This is mainly because they are enthusiastic and keen to get on with their work.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils make good progress across the school, and are doing especially well in writing. In 2016, pupils in Year 6 were deemed to be in the top 10% nationally in this subject.
- Attainment on entry to the Nursery is below expectations for most children. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, their attainment has risen and in 2016 it was above average in writing and broadly average in mathematics and reading.
- In reading, pupils are skilled at using their knowledge of phonics to help them to read unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 1, pupils achieve above-average results in the phonics screening check. Pupils read fluently, but sometimes find it difficult to understand what they have read. Leaders have changed the curriculum to provide greater opportunities for pupils to explore hidden meaning in the books they are reading. This strategy is proving to be successful this year. For example, when writing in Year 6, pupils were encouraged to understand and use vocabulary such as 'desirous' and 'menacingly'. Pupils know that they can use the dictionary and thesaurus to help with their understanding of new words.
- In mathematics, disadvantaged pupils did slightly less well than others nationally. The school makes effective use of funding to support these pupils. As a result, school assessment information, work sampling and lessons observed during the inspection did not show any significant differences between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others. Teachers are promoting the skill of reasoning so that pupils are not intimidated by some mathematical word problems.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress over time. In the past, these pupils have done better in some year groups, such as Years 5 and 6, than in others. Leaders are monitoring progress more rigorously across the school, and pupils are now identified and supported as soon as needed. Pupils who take part in specific learning programmes tailored to their needs consistently make at least the expected progress.
- Writing was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection. At that time, pupils had too few opportunities to write at length to practise and extend their skills. Writing is now a strength and pupils write fluently and with a good awareness of the audience. Some avoidable errors in spelling and grammar are not picked up by the teachers, despite pupils doing well in these aspects of writing in the national tests.
- The most able pupils, including the disadvantaged, make good progress over time and in most lessons. Teachers are aware of their needs and provide them with good challenge most of the time. Occasionally, as with other ability groups, they could be

challenged more in science and topic work.

- The few pupils at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language are supported well by members of staff and the pupils, enabling them to learn to speak English quickly.
- There are occasions in some lessons when a few pupils find work either too easy or too difficult, and when this happens learning slows.
- Pupils' good progress and excellent attitudes towards learning enable them to be well prepared for the next stage of their education and later life.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Early years provision has been transformed since the previous inspection and is now outstanding. Excellent leadership and management have driven up attainment and progress very rapidly.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are highly skilled in providing the right level of support to enable all children to build on what they already know and can do.
- Members of staff make very effective use of resources and questioning to support learning. For example, in the Nursery, a story was used well to promote vocabulary about animals. In the Reception Year, children acted out a story sequence to help generate ideas for their own versions of a well-known tale.
- Children, including the disadvantaged, make outstanding progress from their starting points across all areas of learning. Consequently, they are very well prepared for the next stage of their education. Attainment has been rising for the last three years and it is above average by the time the children enter Year 1.
- The curriculum is stimulating and challenging. For example, in the Nursery, children enjoyed making porridge and acting out the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears.
- Children's learning is checked rigorously, and close links are established between the home and school to support learning. For example, during the inspection, parents attended a workshop about how the school teaches the children to read. In addition, parents receive frequent reports on how well their children are doing. Parents appreciate the access they have to the children's 'special folders' of work.
- There is a strong emphasis on teaching phonics, and children in the Nursery are already starting to use this knowledge to help write letters and short words.
- Children behave exceptionally well, enjoy school very much and learn from each other. They feel very safe at school and know how to stay safe.

School details

Unique reference number	102770
Local authority	Newham
Inspection number	10019668

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	425
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Anthony
Headteacher	Natasha Scott
Telephone number	0208 534 0476
Website	www.st-francis.newham.sch.uk
Email address	info@st-francis.newham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22–23 October 2014

Information about this school

- St Francis' Catholic Primary School is much larger than an average-sized primary school.
- There is a morning Nursery and two Reception classes in the early years provision.
- Pupils come from a range of backgrounds, with most being of Black African or Black Caribbean heritage. Over half of the pupils speak English as an additional language, but only a few are at the early stages of learning to speak English.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons, 10 jointly with the headteacher or one of the assistant headteachers.
- Discussions were held with leaders, other members of staff, a member of the local authority and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors held informal discussions with a number of parents and scrutinised 20 responses to the Ofsted 'Parent View' questionnaire.
- Questionnaires from 22 members of staff and 94 pupils were also scrutinised.
- Pupils in Years 2 and 6 were heard to read.
- A range of information supplied by the school was checked, including the school's own information about how well pupils are doing, planning documents and checks on the quality of teaching. The inspectors also looked at the school's development plan and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding procedures.

Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Gary Rawlings	Ofsted Inspector
Kanwaljit Singh	Ofsted Inspector

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