

# St Francis RC Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105529
<b>Local Authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	324237
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Carmen Markham

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	223
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Patrick Devlin
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Louise Frize
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 June 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Ellenbrook Close Gorton Manchester Lancashire M12 5LZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 2233457
<b>Fax number</b>	0161 2232768

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average-sized primary school draws pupils from an area where there is some significant social and economic disadvantage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is increasing and is also well above the national average; most of these pupils speak English as an additional language. Thirty three different languages are represented in the school. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The school admits children into full-time education from the age of three into its Early Years Foundation Stage provision. The school has a Healthy School Award and has been awarded the Artsmark gold.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

St Francis RC Primary is an outstanding school. It welcomes pupils from many different cultures and enables them to become part of a very happy, safe community where achievement is outstanding. The school was judged to be a satisfactory and rapidly improving school in the previous inspection. The excellent progress made by the school is due to highly effective leadership and management and the development of high quality provision. The process of improvement is almost complete with only the good Early Years Foundation Stage requiring some further development. The school's capacity to improve is outstanding.

Most pupils enter the Nursery, and subsequently Year 1, speaking a wide range of different languages and many are at the early stages of acquiring English. Very skilled support enables pupils to learn the language quickly but initially they do not have enough English to make the expected progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing. By the end of Year 2 standards are below average. However, by Year 3 these pupils are becoming increasingly proficient in English and standards rise very quickly so that by the end of Year 6 these pupils attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are well above the national average and are in line with their peers whose heritage language is English. The achievement of all pupils by the end of Year 6 is consistently outstanding. All groups of pupils achieve equally well.

The development of firm foundations for learning has been a major contributor to this success. The development of excellent community links, close working with parents and carers, high expectations in relation to behaviour and attendance and a strong ethos of mutual respect and cooperation has created a safe environment for pupils to grow in confidence and become independent learners. The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are swiftly identified and skilfully supported. Pupils understand how to improve their work and they enjoy the challenges that they face every day in their classrooms. This strong provision has made a very significant contribution to the outstanding personal development and well-being of the pupils. They are highly responsible, taking care of each other and the community. They value diversity, health, safety and learning.

The outstanding leaders, managers and governors work together as a very strong team to deliver their vision of a school with the happiness and success of pupils at its heart. All who work at the school share this vision. High quality staff have been appointed and trained to deliver an excellent curriculum based on themes that motivate pupils and develop basic skills. Teaching is of good quality overall; outstanding in Key Stage 2 where pupils make extremely rapid progress. Teachers know their pupils well, carefully track their progress and use assessment to plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils. Subject leaders are very effective. The accommodation and resources are effectively managed to improve learning and the school provides outstanding value for money. Much has been done to promote community cohesion. The governors have been very important in creating and reinforcing community links. The school has worked hard to actively address barriers that can cause tensions between local and global communities. They have been very successful. Pupils are able to talk positively about personal differences and understand that differences are assets. The harmony that characterises this multi-cultural school is a clear indication of the outstanding impact of the school's delivery of its community cohesion policy.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter Nursery with skills well below the expected levels for their age. When they complete the Reception Year their skills are below expectation. This represents good achievement. Carefully planned induction procedures ensure that they settle extremely well and parents develop good relationships with the school. Staff's initial assessments of children's skills are thorough and they monitor their progress very thoroughly. Adults ensure that interactions with children contain appropriate levels of challenge and support. This enables children to make good progress in their learning and development. Teaching is good. Children quickly become confident, independent learners. High expectations of behaviour ensure children behave well and enjoy their learning. They show obvious enjoyment while, for example, exploring in the pond water and looking at the bugs; younger children enjoy making music outside. Opportunities for outdoor play are inconsistent. Outdoor play sessions in Nursery are excellent but in Reception outdoor provision is not well developed. In both year groups the opportunities for role-play and imaginative play are too limited.

Leadership and management are good. This ensures an inclusive environment where the needs of children are met. Very good use is made of specialist support to identify and help children with additional needs, including those at the early stages of learning English. Staff have a good understanding of the expectations of the Early Years Foundation Stage and have begun to evaluate their own practice and introduce improvements. The nurturing ethos and excellent levels of supervision enable children to feel very safe and secure within their school. Transition onto Key Stage 1 is very well managed.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve opportunities for continuous outdoor play, role-play and imaginative play to reflect best practice for three to five year olds and ensure consistency of provision across the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

By the end of Year 2 attainment is below average overall. It is broadly in line with the national average in mathematics, just below average in reading but well below in writing. In Key Stage 2 pupils' progress has accelerated in the last three years so that standards attained in Year 6 have risen significantly from below the national average to well above average in English, mathematics and science. Provisional results for 2008 show that the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels has also increased and is significantly above the national average. Current Year 6 pupils are working towards similar levels. Given that pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below average, their well above average attainment by the end of Year 6 represents outstanding achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make outstanding progress as their needs are quickly identified, they are very skilfully supported and their progress is carefully monitored. Girls have performed better than boys in the past but, following improved teaching and the use of resources more appropriate to boys, they are currently doing better than previously.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school. Their attendance has improved significantly over recent years and is in line with the national average. Their behaviour is excellent. They are very considerate towards each other and to visitors. Pupils feel safe and behave very responsibly around school. They adopt healthy lifestyles, make healthy choices during school lunch and take a regular and active part in sporting activities. Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been fostered by many curriculum initiatives and strong links with the church and parish. Pupils value, understand and take a pride in the many cultures and faiths represented in the school. They are given meaningful responsibilities to develop their personal qualities; the house system, and the leadership and competition that it engenders, makes a significant contribution to pupil development. The excellent school council is very effective in being the voice of pupils in the school. A series of fundraising events, like the Brazilian street children project and work with the Salford diocese, allow pupils to contribute effectively to the local and global community. The economic well-being of pupils is outstanding. Pupils develop a very good range of basic skills; these are enhanced by introductions to the world of work through helping out in the office and garden, and strong links to a variety of occupations. Pupils know that many skills are transferable into the world of work.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall; outstanding in Key Stage 2. Excellent relationships help learners respond to appropriate challenges. Pupils cooperate well with each other on a good range of practical tasks. Effective teaching and the good use of able teaching assistants enable pupils to make progress that accelerates rapidly in Key Stage 2. Thoughtful questions are a key feature of teaching. Learners are given opportunities to think and then provide detailed answers to questions. Teachers use a good range of resources that inspire pupils to explain new ideas and promote their understanding. In most lessons pupils are encouraged to practise their targets on a regular basis, to consolidate learning and ensure that target setting is a meaningful process. Teachers make good use of marking to inform pupils how well they are doing in their work and what they need to do to improve. Teaching matches learners' needs and thoughtful planning helps cater for all groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In outstanding lessons this planning is further refined to challenge higher attaining pupils and lesson pace is appropriate at all times. However, this is not a feature in all lessons.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 1

The curriculum emphasises the development of basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. The introduction of a thematic curricular approach has accelerated the acquisition and development of basic skills across a range of subjects and made learning more relevant and interesting. Lesson plans and very good personal education plans ensure that the curriculum is accessible to all pupils. Lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education promote pupils' excellent personal development. Physical education and sport partnerships are valued and effective. The introduction of Spanish is a very successful

and popular aspect of the curriculum and has done much to promote the exploration of Spanish lifestyle and culture through close links to a small village in Spain. Pupils praise the variety and good quality of enrichment activities. The school further enriches the curriculum through educational and residential visits that successfully help pupils to develop higher aspirations and confidence in their own ability. A wide range of extra-curricular activities including the very popular steel pans, choir, drama and sport are very well attended and much appreciated by pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

High levels of staff commitment to outstanding pastoral care, and robust academic guidance secure pupil achievement. Clear and established procedures to promote child protection and safeguarding procedures meet requirements. Health and safety arrangements, including risk assessments, are good. The management of attendance is good and effective. Detailed marking informs pupils about progress in their work and the next stage of learning. Thorough systems, that are very well managed, track the progress of all pupils and identify those at risk to ensure their needs are catered for. Highly skilled teachers and teaching assistants deliver specialist programmes to accelerate the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those at the early stages of learning English. The school works very well with a large variety of outside agencies and parents so that all learners are very well supported and thus make outstanding progress. The induction and transfer procedures through school and later to secondary school are excellent. They include a popular mother and toddler club to introduce parents and children to the school. For those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, transition is individually planned to ensure a stress free changeover.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The very committed and able headteacher provides a clear direction for this very inclusive school. Together with outstanding governors and a strong management team, she has had an exceptional impact upon school improvement. Her excellent leadership is based on a clear vision of 'a safe and happy community where every individual is supported and encouraged to achieve their targets'. The headteacher has gained the unanimous support of parents and carers who say that 'children are cared for as individuals and the whole family is well supported'. Therefore numbers on roll are rising. There is a very strong sense of teamwork and morale is high.

The school's evaluation of its performance is unerringly accurate, if sometimes a little modest. Areas for improvement have been correctly identified and addressed in an excellent school improvement plan. Very good evaluation of pupils' progress has led to the setting of challenging school targets, and standards are rising as a result. The school's rapid response to potential underachievement is a very strong feature of its work. Staff are well trained and provided with the experiences that enable them to deliver the educational priorities for the school. Middle leaders have developed their management roles very effectively and are having a significant impact on pupils' progress. They have a very good understanding of the needs of the school, and resources are well deployed and managed. Maximum use is made of the school building and new development is carefully linked to the needs of the pupils. The school has prioritised, carefully planned and evaluated its promotion of community cohesion. The way in which pupils

are helped to value and work with local and global communities and to have close links with Spain makes an outstanding contribution to this important aspect of life.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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 learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making the inspection team so welcome in your school. You were all very helpful and polite. I admired the beautiful displays of your work on the walls and ceilings in your classrooms. I particularly enjoyed looking at the world map in the entrance area with all your photographs and the details of many the places in the world that you come from. Your choir sings beautifully with a lot of enjoyment and enthusiasm. I think you are making really good progress playing the steel pans. Music is obviously very important in your school.

You attend an outstanding school. Your personal development and behaviour are excellent. You are ready to listen and learn! Well done! The house system really encourages you to work hard and behave well. I am very impressed by how well the school council represents the pupils in school. You are very considerate and kind to other people and take good care of each other so that you can all enjoy school. You attend school increasingly regularly, know how to stay healthy and safe and make the most of all the exciting activities the school provides during and after school. Your school has outstanding links with the community and you enjoy fundraising for others. I hope you all enjoyed wearing your pyjamas on Red Nose Day!

The leadership of the school by the headteacher, her team and the governors is outstanding. The school has improved a lot because of all their hard work and good ideas. They have made sure that teaching is good so you achieve very well. By the end of Year 6 pupils reach standards that are much higher than those reached nationally. Staff are excellent at looking after you and you feel safe and happy in school. As you get older, you make increasingly rapid progress in lessons because your teachers plan them carefully so you have work that suits you. Teachers also make sure that they involve you in a lot of interesting topics, activities and visits to make your learning more interesting.

One of the reasons for my visit was to see how your school can improve. The one area that should be improved is in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception). The Reception class has fewer really good opportunities for outside play than the Nursery and neither class has enough opportunities for role-play and imaginative play. I have asked the school to improve this.