

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
www.ofsted.gov.uk



## **4 December 2015**

Mrs Louise Frize  
St Francis RC Primary School  
Ellenbrook Close  
Gorton  
Manchester  
M12 5LZ

Dear Mrs Frize

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of St Francis RC Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 24 November 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This monitoring inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out because Her Majesty's Chief Inspector was concerned about outcomes for pupils at the school.

### **Evidence**

During my visit, I scrutinised the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements. I evaluated the school improvement plan, as well as governing body reports. I also considered the most recent school assessment information and your records of checks on the quality of teaching.

I held meetings with you and the deputy headteacher, two middle leaders and four members of the governing body. I evaluated, with you and the deputy headteacher, a substantial range of pupils' mathematics and English books from each year group. I visited every classroom to observe learning and to speak to pupils.

### **Context**

St Francis RC Primary School is an average sized primary school with 258 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups is high. The proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional or believed not to be their first

language is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils entitled to pupil premium funding (additional funding provided by the government for pupils who are known to be eligible for free schools meals or who are looked after by the local authority) is above the national average. The proportion of pupils with disabilities or special educational needs is above the national average.

This monitoring inspection was carried out in response to a decline in standards in 2014.

You, senior leaders and governors know the school very well. You make it your business to know every pupil and how well they are achieving. As a result, you were able to identify the specific reasons for the fall in achievement seen at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 and take action to ensure that this decline was arrested. Consequently, in 2015, the proportion of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 reaching the level expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics improved significantly to be above the national average.

You are determined that children get off to a flying start from the moment they enter the school. Children in the early years are enthused by their learning because their teachers ignite their imagination. Children from both the Nursery and Reception classes, for example, were engrossed in their 'caving' activity because their teacher brought their learning to life; joining in with the children, crawling through the dark and wet 'cave'. It is clear that adults and children in the early years share your view that 'every day should be a carnival'.

Teachers know the pupils in their class well. This allows them to identify quickly anyone who is at risk of falling behind and to discuss what action to take with senior leaders. Interventions in mathematics, reading and writing are used effectively to ensure that pupils catch up with their peers. You tackle robustly any barriers to pupils' learning. For example, a counsellor is employed to work directly with families and pupils to overcome any social or emotional difficulties that they may be facing. Parents with whom I spoke during my visit were fulsome in their praise of the support that they receive from the school.

You and governors manage resources effectively to make sure that pupils are given the support that they need to achieve well. In Year 6, for example, all groups of pupils are making strong progress due to the support of four qualified teachers. Lessons planned by the class teacher challenge all groups of pupils at the appropriate level. Each supporting teacher has strong subject knowledge, which ensures that learning moves forward. This was clearly evident in the mathematics that I observed, where pupils worked diligently to calculate missing angles in triangles and quadrilaterals.

Training for staff is given a high priority to ensure that teachers' skills and knowledge are regularly updated. Staff meetings are devoted to sharing good practice and developing areas such as writing across different subjects. Checks on the quality of teaching this term, however, have not been done on the impact of

training on pupils' learning. As a result, in a small number of classes, there are some inconsistencies in the quality of marking and feedback and in opportunities to develop problem solving skills and challenge for the most able. These have not been tackled as quickly as they should. You, senior leaders and governors are aware of this and are putting plans in place to ensure that this issue is addressed quickly.

Senior leaders and governors have their sights set firmly on continuing to build on the successes of 2015. Plans for further improvement reflect the need to embed changes to assessment systems and the new curriculum, as well as further develop problem solving and reading skills for the most-able pupils. As discussed, measurable criteria to judge your success, as well as planning clear milestones, will allow you and governors to keep a closer check on how successful your actions are being and ensure that you remain on track to reach your targets.

Pupils' good behaviour contributes strongly to their learning, inside and outside of the classroom. For example, children in the early years worked sensibly with each other on a range of activities to develop their letter recognition skills during my visit. Pupils play sensibly alongside and with one another on the playground, irrespective of their gender, culture or background. Pupils are proud of their school and greet everyone who visits their school with confidence and friendship.

Governors share your passion for the school community. They give of their time generously and are a regular presence within the school. Governors use their visits to the school to see for themselves what is going on in classrooms. They speak to pupils frequently and hold meetings with the school council to gather their views. Procedures for keeping pupils safe are given a high priority and are effective. Governors undertake their own safeguarding audit to ensure that training for staff is in place and that the required checks on adults have taken place.

### **External support**

The local authority has had a light-touch involvement with the school. The local authority adviser undertakes termly quality assurance visits and reports provide information for governors. The school is also working with an external consultant to further develop the teaching of mathematics across the school.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Ensure that standards remain consistently strong across all classes by making sure that leaders, at all levels, undertake regular and robust checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Review improvement plans so that success can be measured and leaders can check on the progress towards targets for improvement.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Manchester, to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Diocese of Salford. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Martin Bell

**Her Majesty's Inspector**