

St Francis' Catholic Primary School



Station Road
Nailsea, North Somerset
BS48 4PD
Tel: 01275 855373

Head teacher:
Mrs Catherine Hunt

29 June 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

Introduction

The Ofsted inspection of St Francis School took place on 29 & 30 January 2020. The previous inspection was on 10 & 11 March 2009, a gap of 11 years. Schools judged 'Outstanding' are exempt from inspection. However, a small number of these schools have been inspected and we were one. We were not given the reasons for our inspection.

The two inspectors met the senior leadership team, some of the teachers, some children, looked at children's work and observed a few lessons and a playtime. They met the governors late on the afternoon of the second day. They reviewed parental questionnaires and surveys as well as past attainment scores of the pupils.

Ofsted Inspection Finding

After spending two days in the school, they were of the opinion that the provision was 'Inadequate with Serious Weaknesses'. This judgement was led by the inspectors' findings regarding Safeguarding, which automatically led to the main judgement and that of 'Leadership and Management' category being graded 'Inadequate'. All other areas were graded as 'Requiring Improvement' (equivalent to the old 'Satisfactory' grading).

Staff and governors have had many months to process the shock, disappointment and a whole range of other emotions which this Ofsted report has brought. One of the hardest things for us has not being able to share the report with the community. We know this will also be a shock to many of you.

The Ofsted Report

The attached report is difficult to reconcile with what we know of the school, the care we take of your children, their attainment and the education they receive. It is also at odds with consistent parental and child feedback. Clearly, the governors and staff are devastated with this result and in particular with the language of the report. The two inspectors were only on site for two days and came to conclusions at odds with our understanding of the school and other expert external consultants.

The initial inspection judgement was changed after internal moderation by Ofsted, which is rare. A formal complaint has been made to Ofsted by the school about some parts of the inspection and we have rigorously challenged the findings, the wording of the inspection report and the manner in which evidence was collected.

We were expecting to issue the report before lockdown, but administrative errors by Ofsted meant we were unable to do this. Ofsted recognised that lockdown prevented us from meeting with parents face to face and

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confirmed in writing that the report would not be published until schools had fully reopened and we could have a formal meeting. However, Ofsted changed its decision at short notice.

Action taken since January

In response to the report, the school has already addressed the most pressing findings and has drawn up an action plan to address others. We have continued to monitor and follow the plan during the period of lockdown.

Below we have outlined some of the actions that have already been implemented.

Safeguarding

We want to stress that, at St Francis, we take safeguarding and the well-being of your children to be of the greatest importance and we are particularly disappointed with this part of the report. Since January, we have had our safeguarding reviewed by North Somerset and were found to be compliant. We have purchased a new online system to standardise the recording of concerns and behavioural issues. A programme of re-training for all staff and governors has been rolled out and has continued throughout the Covid-19 school closure.

We firmly believe that all children at the school are safe, we know them and take exceptional care of them. The report makes repeated references to bullying and to behaviour which is in direct contradiction to parental and pupil feedback and external moderation. The school firmly upholds both its Behaviour and Anti-bullying policies.

Senior Leadership Team

The report identified the workload of the senior leadership team as a weakness and that this has impacted on the development of the curriculum. This in turn impacted on the judgment on teaching and learning. They also felt that the governors were not sufficiently supportive of them, although this is contrary to the view of the senior leadership team. To address this we have been given additional funding by North Somerset to allow the Deputy Head to have an additional day out of the classroom to work on curriculum planning and development and for us to have additional support from our school improvement partner. These measures have been implemented and are already proving to be effective and useful.

Teaching and Learning

The school has worked hard to widen the curriculum in recent years whilst maintaining attainment above national average. 74% of children leaving our school in 2019 achieved the expected standard across reading, writing and maths compared to 65% nationally. This placed us 14th out of 74 schools in North Somerset. Our three-year average for children achieving the expected standard across reading, writing and maths is 79% compared to 63% nationally.

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What this means for St Francis'

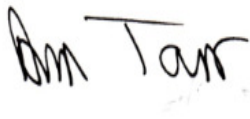
The school will receive an order to become an academy as an automatic result of this judgment. Clifton Diocese currently has no facility for us to become an academy. However, this is something that the Diocese is working towards and some of you will be aware of previous communications with you about this. In the meantime, there will be no immediate change and the school will continue to be supported by the Local Authority.

Finally

We are not alone in being concerned about the new inspection framework implemented since September 2019 and other schools have raised similar issues and concerns. However, despite our disappointment with the outcome, we want you to know that the governing body, along with the head and staff, are united in their desire to address the improvements highlighted. We will continue to provide a quality education for the pupils we serve, ensuring our children are encouraged to grow, develop and be confident, independent learners.

We know you will have many comments and questions for us. While we cannot yet meet face-to-face, we obviously want to hear what you have to say. You can send these to us by clicking [here](#) or by using the link below. Please respond by 6 July and we will then collate your questions and comments and ensure we give you a virtual means of hearing our response.

Yours sincerely



Ann Tarr
Chair of Governors



Catherine Hunt
Head Teacher

Link to Survey;

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=SiCl620yHEODHwef_nTmI1Ax9gpDI8JPuLYb-Ve6oCVUNk04WU9QNERTUIkzN1hVMEVKTEkyMkpIWC4u