

Saint Fidelis Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101458
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	376568
Inspection dates	17–18 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Alison Cartlidge

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	462
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Br James Boner
Headteacher	Mark Hannon
Date of previous school inspection	12 June 2007
School address	Bexley Road Erith Kent DA8 3HQ
Telephone number	01322 337752
Fax number	01322 332160
Email address	admin@st-fidelis.bexley.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 27 lessons taught by 18 teachers. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, parents and carers, staff and pupils. The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, information on pupils' progress, safeguarding policies and other documents. Questionnaires from 221 parents and carers, 48 members of staff and 96 pupils were scrutinised.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How provision is increasing the progress of pupils, including those who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- How well teaching and the use of assessment information meet differing needs and are increasing learning.
- How well all leaders impact on teaching and learning.
- How care, guidance and support, relationships and the curriculum help pupils to behave well and to make good progress.

Information about the school

This is a well-above-average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British or Black African heritage, with a few pupils coming from a range of other backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has an above-average percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Those pupils have differing needs, including speech and language and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school has received several awards, including International Schools Intermediate Award and Fronter Champion School status for its website's high pupil engagement.

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

High rates of attendance demonstrate the pupils' enthusiasm for coming to this good and rapidly improving school. Pupils make positive comments reflecting the outstanding care, guidance and support they receive. For example, one pupil spoke for others by saying 'We are all brothers and sisters in one family.' The way the school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination is outstanding. Exceptionally caring members of staff work extremely closely with parents and carers to ensure that all pupils are treated with equal respect, enabling all pupils, including those with special educational needs and or/disabilities, to enjoy learning and to do well. Two parents and carers spoke for others by saying 'The teachers are amazing, so dedicated. They genuinely care for all our children' and 'The teachers are very professional and the school is well led.'

Outcomes for pupils are excellent. Children make a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They gain independence and learn quickly. In Years 1 to 6, pupils of differing abilities make good progress, leading to high attainment by the end of Year 6. Pupils are extremely proud of their school and the part they play in school life. They make an outstanding contribution to the school and local community by carrying out a wealth of responsibilities, including being school ambassadors and healthy school councillors. Their well-developed literacy, numeracy and social skills prepare them exceptionally well for later life and the world of work.

Pupils' good behaviour contributes to their good learning in the overwhelming majority of lessons. While most teaching is good, occasionally, lessons do not involve all the pupils fully in whole-class discussions or give them enough opportunity to work independently at an appropriate level and take responsibility for their own learning. When that happens, pupils become passive and the pace of learning is slower. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and their considerate and respectful attitudes towards others are evident in their daily lives.

There are good and mostly accurate procedures for self-evaluation, which support the leaders' planning for improvement. Senior leaders have gathered a wealth of information about provision and pupils' progress, although areas planned for development do not always have sharp enough targets so that leaders can measure the impact of the actions taken in full. Not all middle managers have a thorough understanding of what constitutes good or better teaching so that they can provide

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guidance to colleagues. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection, demonstrating a good capacity to sustain improvement. The curriculum has broadened to make it more exciting and has helped to consolidate the pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics. Additional support for those not making quite as much progress as other pupils, including some pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, has increased pupils' motivation and is starting to narrow this slight gap in attainment.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and reduce the remaining incidence of satisfactory teaching by:
 - making sure that pupils' differing needs are always met in lessons
 - enabling all pupils to participate during whole-class discussions
 - ensuring that pupils have greater opportunity to work independently and to be responsible for their own learning.

- Strengthen the evaluation of teaching, learning and school development by:
 - making sure all middle managers know what constitutes good or outstanding teaching
 - sharpening the targets for whole-school developments so that leaders can measure the impact of actions taken more easily.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

The vast majority of children join the Early Years Foundation Stage working within the levels expected for their age, although attainment is lower in communication, language and literacy than in other areas of learning. Pupils in all year groups enjoy thoroughly coming to school. For example, in a good science lesson in Year 3, pupils discussed with considerable zeal a slide showing rotten teeth. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, do well over time and learning is quick in most lessons. Consequently, attainment is high, especially in English and mathematics. Pupils are supportive of each other and work together well. For example, in a good mathematics lesson in Year 2, pupils helped each other to create number sentences to match a given answer and, consequently, they gained confidence and learned quickly. In a few lessons, when teachers talk for too long, pupils are given limited opportunities to practise what they have learnt and to make decisions about how they are going to complete a task.

Achievement is good for all groups of pupils, although pupils known to be eligible for free school meals do slightly less well than other groups. The school has established intervention support for those pupils, which is helping them to develop good working habits. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given good support towards reaching their specific targets.

Pupils feel very safe at school and know how to avoid danger. For example, road

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safety officers write to parents and carers to warn them of the dangers of parking near the school gates. Most pupils say that they feel listened to and know that their worries are tackled swiftly and effectively. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a particular strength. The pupils take a full part in school prayers, raise funds for charities and reflect deeply and sensitively when discussing their own experiences. For example, one pupil showed a thorough understanding of human frailties by saying ‘You should always forgive no matter how many times you do it.’ The pupils’ awareness of various cultures is enhanced by the school’s international links, showing that the school deserves its International Schools Award. Pupils respect diversity and are aware that ‘we are all people’. Pupils are enthusiastic about following the school’s clear moral code and are very polite and helpful. Pupils keep healthy by taking part in the various sporting activities on offer, have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, and most eat healthy lunches.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
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	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers and teaching assistants form good relationships with the pupils and manage behaviour well with frequent praise. Teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach and use resources well to support learning. For example, in a good science lesson in Year 4, the teacher helped pupils to use words such as ‘extinction’ and ‘adaptation’ when discussing pictures of dinosaurs and a dodo. Marking is largely informative, although, in a few lessons, teachers do not adapt work well enough to match pupils’ differing needs.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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The curriculum focuses well on the development of literacy and numeracy and cross-curricular work is well developed. Recent improvements are helping to motivate pupils who learn slightly less quickly than others, although, occasionally, teachers talk for too long in lessons, limiting opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills. The creative arts are promoted well and are demonstrated by the delightful performances by the steel bands. The school provides a wide range of exciting additional activities, such as a sleepover for Year 2 and residential visits to Rochester, the Isle of Wight, and Paris for older pupils.

Members of staff know the pupils very well and keep track of their progress meticulously. There is exceptional support for pupils who are finding life difficult, enabling them and their families to take a full part in what the school has to offer. Close links with other schools and external agencies ensure that transition arrangements are very strong, enabling pupils to be confident about changing class or school. Attendance is monitored rigorously and the school provides excellent support for pupils at times of crisis, such as following a bereavement.

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	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is passionate about the school and shares his high aspirations for its performance with other members of staff. Leaders embed ambition and drive improvement well because there is a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school further. Whole-school developments are having a positive and sustained impact on pupils' progress. The promotion of equality of opportunity and tackling of discrimination is outstanding because pupils of differing abilities are supported and encouraged equally well and minor pockets of satisfactory progress are being tackled very robustly. All pupils are included very well socially.

The school's safeguarding arrangements are thorough. Members of staff are trained effectively, with the result that procedures are carried out robustly. Leaders and the governing body are diligent in ensuring safe recruitment.

The governing body is knowledgeable about the school. It plays a key role in supporting and challenging other leaders. It has helped bring about positive changes in aspects of school life, such as developing links with parents and carers. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to be involved in the local community and to learn about cultures other than their own. For example, recently, pupils enjoyed

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sampling multicultural foods and Year 6 discussed the injustice of slavery. The school is seeking to develop community cohesion further by expanding opportunities for pupils to forge links with a contrasting school in Ashford. Excellent links with parents and carers support pupils’ high attainment. For example, the school provides a website ‘Fronter’ with homework and forums so that parents and carers can help to support their children’s learning at home.

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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes, especially in their personal, social and emotional development and communication, language and literacy. As a result, they enter Year 1 with above-average attainment. Children enjoy working with each other and members of staff on the wide range of activities provided. For example, during the inspection, children in the Nursery developed language and independence when working together in the ‘baby clinic’ indoors or by being members of a ‘police force’ outside. In the Reception classes, children enjoyed taking turns to explore their senses by handling a range of natural objects such as shells and seaweed.

Welcoming and supportive members of staff work exceptionally closely with parents and carers, enabling children to settle into school life swiftly and to establish good relationships with others. Clear routines and thoughtful questioning during focused activities help children to become confident and keen to learn. Children enjoy talking about what they are doing, learn quickly and behave sensibly. Sensitive support is provided for children’s social and emotional needs. Leaders have recently developed greater accuracy in assessments and there are now good arrangements for assessing learning. Children make choices about what they are going to do, although in the

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Reception classes, there is limited outdoor space, reducing the number of activities that can be made available at any one time. That affects the boys particularly, who tend to spend more time working outside and have slightly lower attainment than the girls. Leaders have secure plans for development based on the improved progress information.

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

There was an above-average response to the inspection questionnaire and the very large majority of parents and carers are positive about all aspects of the school. They are particularly pleased with teaching and the way their children are kept safe and happy. The inspection team found this to be the case also. Although a few parents and carers disagreed that the school deals with their concerns and suggestions and deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour, during the inspection, the inspection team found that the school responds to concerns and suggestions appropriately and no unacceptable behaviour was observed. The school seeks the views of parents and carers and makes changes in the light of their views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Saint Fidelis Catholic 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 221 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 462 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	174	79	46	21	1	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	158	71	62	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	135	61	78	35	6	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	125	57	85	38	9	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	128	58	91	41	1	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	125	57	85	38	9	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	130	59	86	39	4	2	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)	93	42	101	46	2	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	118	53	88	40	6	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	105	48	96	43	9	4	1	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	88	40	107	48	11	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	127	57	86	39	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	147	67	69	31	5	2	0	0

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



19 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Fidelis Catholic Primary School, Erith DA8 3HQ

We enjoyed coming to see your friendly school. Thank you for being so helpful during our visit. We are pleased to tell you that your school provides you with a good education.

These are the best things about your school.

- You enjoy school and your attainment is high, especially in English and mathematics.
- You behave well and are exceptionally good at taking responsibilities in school and the local area.
- You say that teachers look after you very well and we agree with you.
- The headteacher and other leaders are doing a good job and know what needs to be done to make your school even better.

These are the things we have asked your school to do next to help it improve.

- Make sure that teachers give you work that is just right for you always, help you to take a more active part in whole-class discussions, and give you greater opportunity to work independently and to be responsible for your own learning.
- Help some leaders to make sure that you learn very quickly in more lessons, and to be able to show more precisely how new developments have helped to improve the school.

Thank you once again for telling us about your school and letting us see your work. All of you could continue to help your teachers by always taking part in discussions.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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