

De La Salle School and Language College

Ghyllgrove, Basildon, Essex SS14 2LA

Inspection dates

9–10 October 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Consequently, most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. The number of pupils who are excluded from school for fixed periods of time has reduced. There has been a notable reduction in the number of pupils who are excluded from school on more than one occasion.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Good relationships between pupils and with their teachers contribute to a productive learning environment that supports pupils to make good progress.
- The curriculum is well-matched to pupils' aspirations and prepares pupils well for the next stage of education, employment or training. A wide variety of extra-curricular activities provides opportunities for pupils to pursue their interests.
- Pupils' personal and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are supported effectively. Pupils are tolerant of different views and understand the importance of respect for others' beliefs and cultures.
- In the absence of a governing body, the interim executive board (IEB) is highly effective. It has brought some stability to leadership and has ensured that leaders have accurately identified priorities for improvement. Members are rigorous in holding school leaders to account for the school's work. They provide appropriate challenge and support.
- A small minority of teachers do not ensure that activities provide appropriate challenge and support to pupils, including those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and the most able.
- Additional adults know the needs of those pupils that they support very well. However, a small minority of teachers do not plan effectively for how additional adults can best support pupils' learning in lessons. As a result, the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities varies.
- Leaders' analysis of their actions lacks precision. This makes it difficult to identify accurately their impact on pupils' outcomes, behaviour or attendance.
- Although the headteacher has a clear vision for the school, she has not secured the support of a minority of teachers. Members of the IEB are working with the headteacher and senior leaders to ensure that priorities for improvement focus appropriately on achieving their shared aims for the school and its pupils.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that all pupils make strong progress by ensuring that all teachers:
 - consistently plan learning activities that are well-matched to pupils' needs and abilities, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the most able
 - plan for the effective use of additional adults who support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Improve outcomes by ensuring that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and the most able make consistently strong progress across a range of subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have a shared understanding of the vision for the school and how priorities link to achieving leaders' aims
 - establishing a governing body to continue the highly effective work of the IEB in supporting and challenging school leaders
 - ensuring that all leaders, including those new to leadership roles, evaluate the impact of their actions precisely to ensure that actions secure the improvements intended.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- There has been a period of uncertainty and turbulence in school leadership due to a breakdown of leadership and governance in November 2017. Effective and swift action taken by the local authority and diocese is ensuring that stability is returning. The good standard of education provided by the school has been sustained. However, there is still no partnership between an established governing body and senior leaders to set the strategic direction of the school. This is a key reason why the effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement.
- The headteacher has a clear vision for the school which links to the priorities for improvement that she set. However, a minority of teachers do not feel that improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has been as high a priority as in the past. Therefore, they do not have a shared understanding of the reasons that underpin the priorities set for improvement. The IEB has worked with the senior leadership team to agree priorities and put in place an appropriate improvement plan. However, members acknowledge that there is still work to do to ensure agreement about the balance between different priorities in the plan.
- Leaders have used the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils to provide small group and individual teaching, to provide basic equipment and uniform and to contribute to programmes to support the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Funds are also used to enable pupils to participate in educational visits. However, leaders have not evaluated precisely the impact that these different actions have made on overcoming pupils' barriers to learning and improving their outcomes, behaviour and attendance. Consequently, leaders cannot say for certain which actions best support disadvantaged pupils' learning, behaviour and attendance.
- Leaders have implemented a commercial scheme to promote and support the development of pupils' reading skills. They also promote reading through providing regular opportunities for pupils to read in form time. Leaders use additional funding to provide a programme to support those pupils who did not achieve the standards expected for their age in reading at the end of key stage 2. They acknowledge that this is having less impact on helping pupils catch up with their classmates than the support in place for mathematics. They have not fully evaluated why this is the case and cannot demonstrate clearly which aspects of the programme work well and which do not.
- Leaders rightly recognise that, historically, too many pupils were being excluded from school for fixed periods of time. Changes to the school's procedures, work with individual pupils and use of the 'internal reflection and reconciliation room' have successfully reduced the number of pupils who are excluded from school. The most recent year showed a significant reduction in the number of pupils excluded from school on more than one occasion. Teachers feel well-supported by leaders in managing pupils' behaviour.
- Teachers who are new or recent members of the profession are positive about the support that they receive. The majority of teachers feel that leaders use training and development opportunities to encourage and support teachers' professional

development. Teachers spoke positively about the opportunities to receive support and share ideas with colleagues.

- Subject leaders have accurately identified the strengths and areas for improvement in each of their areas. They have clear and appropriate improvement plans which they check regularly to ensure that their actions are making a difference. This includes regular checks on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their subject areas. Subject leaders use a range of information to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and identify areas for improvement. This work is quality assured by the senior leader responsible for teaching, learning and assessment. Subject leaders feel well-supported by the senior leaders linked to their areas and are clear about how these leaders hold them to account for pupils' outcomes.
- Pastoral leaders know pupils well and are clear about their roles and responsibilities. Working alongside the senior leader responsible for pupils' behaviour and welfare, they have ensured that there has been a clear focus on monitoring attendance and intervening where they identify concerns. High attendance is celebrated. As a result, pupils' attendance is higher than the national average.
- The carefully considered curriculum supports pupils' academic and personal development effectively. Pupils who have weaker basic literacy and numeracy skills are provided with timetabled additional support. Almost all pupils study a modern foreign language. Pupils achieve well in a range of subjects. A coordinated programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught through form tutor time. This is supplemented by additional events, such as visits from outside speakers or organisations. Pupils are provided with appropriate guidance about future careers and options for education, employment or training. They are well-prepared for their next steps.
- Teachers identify opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in each subject area. There are also a variety of sporting activities, clubs and trips that allow pupils to pursue and develop their personal interests. Pupils say that they are encouraged to respect people from other backgrounds and treat all people equally. They understand why this is important in preparing them for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a culture of high expectations and aspirations for pupils. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and feel well-supported by their teachers. Pupils achieve, attend and behave well as a result.

Governance of the school

- Although there are plans in place to establish a governing body, which will at first shadow and then take on the role of the IEB, the timescale to achieve this is unclear.
- The local authority and diocese acted quickly to put in place an IEB when a significant proportion of the previous governing body resigned. This has ensured that some stability has been restored after a period of turbulence and uncertainty.
- The IEB is made up of highly knowledgeable and experienced individuals who have the skills needed to support and challenge school leaders. They quickly and accurately identified strengths in the provision and those aspects, including leadership, that need

to improve. Actions that have been put in place to secure this improvement are appropriate and they are ensuring that some aspects of the school are improving.

- The IEB holds school leaders to account closely for the school's performance and for demonstrating that their actions are bringing about improvement and sustaining the quality of education provided. Members of the IEB have ensured that they receive information that enables them to evaluate leaders' actions. Where information has not been provided in enough depth they have, rightly, challenged the headteacher to provide this. They have ensured that arrangements for managing the headteacher's performance have continued and are suitably robust.
- Members of the IEB monitor different aspects of leaders' work, including safeguarding. This has ensured that arrangements to keep pupils safe from harm have remained effective.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders carry out all of the checks required to ensure that adults employed in the school are suitable to work with children. They maintain the single central record of these checks accurately.
- The child protection policy takes account of the most recent statutory guidance. Teachers are provided with appropriate training to ensure that they can recognise the signs of different forms of abuse and are aware of the risks that pupils face, including those of extremism and radicalisation. As a result, adults, including those new to the school or new to teaching, are confident to refer any concerns that they have.
- The designated senior leader for safeguarding and other members of the safeguarding team understand their roles in keeping pupils safe from harm. They refer concerns to external agencies promptly when they need to do so. Records of concerns are accurately maintained.
- Pupils report that they feel safe in school. They learn how to stay safe, both online and in the wider world, through the PSHE programme and visits from outside speakers or organisations. Pupils showed a good understanding of e-safety. The large majority of pupils feel that teachers deal with any instances of bullying effectively.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Most teaching is effective and builds on pupils' positive attitudes to learning. Pupils engage purposefully in learning activities and are willing to contribute their ideas and views. Consequently, lessons generally flow smoothly and support pupils in making good progress over time in a range of subjects.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use this to provide relevant examples that are effective in supporting learning and allow pupils to recognise the standards that they should aim for. Teachers also ensure that they focus on helping pupils to use subject-specific vocabulary and specialist terms accurately in order to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

- Homework is used effectively to prepare pupils for new learning or consolidate their learning. This has addressed an area for improvement identified at the previous inspection.
- Teachers typically use questioning well to check pupils' understanding. The most effective questioning goes beyond the recall of facts and definitions and challenges pupils to expand on their answers or build on other pupils' responses to show deeper understanding.
- Teachers provide written feedback to pupils in line with the school's policy. Although there are some inconsistencies for a small number of individual teachers, the large majority accurately identifies pupils' achievements and areas for improvement. Pupils' responses to the guidance that teachers provide typically result in improved quality of work and better understanding.
- Leaders have mapped opportunities to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across the curriculum. Teachers make good use of these opportunities. For example, pupils in a geography lesson sensibly and sensitively discussed the issue of poverty in third world countries.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to confidently apply their learning from mathematics in other subjects, particularly science. They use a commercial scheme to develop and assess pupils' reading. This is having some success in developing pupils' fluency and encouraging them to read more widely.
- Additional support for pupils who need to improve their reading, spelling and handwriting is resulting in good progress for individual pupils. The additional adults who support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities know what help individual pupils need and provide effective support for these pupils. However, a minority of teachers do not consider how to best use this expertise when planning their lessons, which results in varied progress for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- In the minority of cases where teaching is less effective, teachers do not ensure that learning activities are well matched to pupils' needs and to provide the right level of challenge or support. As a result, pupils, and particularly the most able and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, find the work too easy or too hard. This results in these groups making progress that is not as consistently strong as for other groups in the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils feel well-cared for and safe in school. Pupils who are new to the school spoke positively about how quickly they had been helped to settle in. This was reflected by comments from parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. One parent commented, 'This school is a brilliant, safe place. I am more than happy with this school and wouldn't send my child anywhere else but here.' Several other parents commented on how their children had grown in confidence since joining the school.
- Pupils are highly respectful of difference and are tolerant of the views of others.

Incidents of racist, homophobic or derogatory language are rare. In lessons, pupils are confident to contribute their ideas and are willing to make mistakes. They do so in an atmosphere that is supportive and where they know that others will listen to their views respectfully.

- Pupils receive information and guidance about the next steps of their education, training or employment, including careers information and guidance. Most pupils feel that they receive the right amount of guidance and information to help them make informed choices about their future plans. Additional support is provided for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities to help them move on to appropriate pathways after they complete key stage 4.
- Leaders make appropriate use of alternative provision for a small number of pupils. They make regular checks on their welfare, attendance and progress.
- There is effective support for the personal and academic development of children looked after. As a result, these children attend regularly and are well supported in their learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. Pupils are punctual and arrive properly equipped and ready to learn. Their positive attitudes to learning and good relationships with one another and their teachers contribute to them achieving well.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school site is good. There is calm and orderly movement between lessons and at less structured periods of the school day, such as before school, lunchtime and breaktime. Pupils socialise sensibly with one another, reflecting the good relationships that have been established.
- Expectations of behaviour are high and are clearly communicated to pupils. Instances of pupils being excluded from school for fixed-periods of time and the numbers of pupils who are repeatedly excluded from school have reduced over the past two years.
- Pupils attend regularly and absence rates are lower than the national average for secondary schools.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils have made strong progress in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics by the end of key stage 4 over a number of years. Unvalidated examination results show that this continued to be the case in most subjects in 2018. Initial information shows that pupils' progress in English was in line with the national average rather than being above average as in previous years. Leaders have identified that this was due to pupils taking their English language examination in Year 10 and not achieving as highly as pupils did in previous years. As a result of their evaluation, leaders have ceased the practice of early entry.
- Outcomes have improved in drama, geography and photography since the previous inspection. Observations show that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in

these subjects has improved. In the subjects where pupils have achieved less well and where improvement has been less evident, there have been issues with recruitment or retention of teachers.

- Disadvantaged pupils have typically made progress and achieved standards of attainment that have been at least in line with other pupils nationally by the end of key stage 4. Provisional examination results for 2018 show that this level of progress has been sustained in mathematics and a number of other subjects. However, attainment and progress in English and some foundation subjects declined.
- Scrutiny of assessment information and pupils' work show that disadvantaged pupils currently in the school make progress in line with that of pupils with similar starting points. However, some disadvantaged pupils have weaker literacy skills than other pupils. While leaders have strategies to support disadvantaged pupils and pupils with weaker literacy skills, they have not evaluated them precisely enough to determine which are making a difference to improving disadvantaged pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils with below average and average attainment at the end of key stage 2 typically make better progress than similar pupils nationally. The progress of the most able pupils currently in the school is more varied than for other prior attainment groups. This is because a minority of teachers do not ensure that they provide learning activities that routinely stretch and challenge the most able pupils.
- Leaders' own analysis of assessment information shows that pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make the same strong, consistent progress as most other groups in the school. Inspectors' observations of learning and scrutiny of pupils' work confirm that this is the case. This is because a minority of teachers do not match activities well to pupils' needs or plan how they can best use the additional adults to help these pupils with their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	115237
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10052998

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

Type of school	Secondary comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	739
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Robin Marcus
Headteacher	Catherine Burnett
Telephone number	01268 281 234
Website	www.dlsbasildon.org
Email address	info@dlsbasildon.org
Date of previous inspection	18–19 November 2014

Information about this school

- De La Salle School and Language College is a voluntary aided school in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brentwood. It is a Lasallian educational institution, which is a group of schools affiliated with the De La Salle Brothers religious order. The school is smaller than the average-sized secondary school.
- The proportions of pupils who have been eligible for free school meals at any time in the last six years, who have SEN and/or disabilities and who speak a language other than English are higher than found in a typical secondary school.
- An IEB was established in January 2018 after the local authority issued a warning notice because of a breakdown in relationships between senior leaders and the governing body.
- The current headteacher took up the post in September 2016. Since her appointment, there has been a staffing restructure, including a change in structure of the senior leadership team.

- A small number of pupils attend Children's Support Centre (CSS). This is short stay provision that accepts referrals from schools and/or the local authority.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited lessons to observe pupils' learning in a range of subjects and year groups. A number of these visits were made jointly with senior leaders. Inspectors also scrutinised pupils' work, heard a group of Year 8 pupils read and visited form periods.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, middle leaders and a group of teachers. A telephone conversation was held with a leader from CSS. Inspectors also considered the 59 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school policies, records and documentation, including those related to safeguarding, improvement planning and the work of the IEB.
- The lead inspector met with members of the IEB and a representative of the Diocese of Brentwood. Telephone conversations were held with a representative of the local authority and the director of education for the Diocese of Brentwood.
- Formal meetings were held with groups of pupils from key stage 3 and key stage 4. Inspectors also spoke to pupils in lessons and at informal times, such as lunchtime, to gather their views on the school. Inspectors considered 118 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, before school, at breaktime and after school. They also reviewed information relating to behaviour and attendance and visited the school's reflection room.
- Inspectors analysed the 22 responses submitted in the last 365 days to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and considered the 19 free-text responses that were submitted. The lead inspector also met one parent.

Inspection team

Paul Wilson, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Caroline Pardy	Ofsted Inspector
Kathryn Herlock	Ofsted Inspector
James Dyke	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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