

Inspection of a good school: Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Dartford

King Edward Avenue, Dartford, Kent DA1 2HX

Inspection dates:

11–12 February 2020

Outcome

Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Dartford continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very enthusiastic about their school. One said: 'Teachers make learning really fun.' Pupils are part of a close-knit community. They describe it as being part of a family. Pupils develop strong friendships and support each other. They uphold the values and ethos of the school very well. Pupils are happy and feel safe.

Pupils are exceptionally polite and welcoming towards visitors. They show respect and kindness towards each other. Pupils respond well to the staff's high expectations of them. They behave well in lessons and throughout the school day. Pupils value the recognition they receive for this. Bullying is very rare. Pupils trust staff to deal with it quickly if it does occur.

Pupils play an active part in the life of the school. They take on many roles of responsibility. For example, pupils who are 'digital leaders' have led assemblies about online safety. They have also created bookmarks to remind others about how to stay safe online.

Pupils enjoy a variety of visits and trips that enrich their learning. For example, Year 6 visited the Golden Hind as part of their study of the Tudors. Most pupils attend at least one of the many clubs on offer.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum with very clear aims. They aspire to make pupils successful learners who take a real interest in the world around them. The curriculum logically maps out the skills and knowledge pupils need. Leaders ensure that teachers know what pupils need to learn in each year group. The curriculum sets out leaders' high expectations in all subjects. Leaders place an emphasis on pupils using the right technical vocabulary. This helps pupils to remember important learning. The curriculum is strongest in subjects such as English, mathematics and science. In subjects such as art and geography, the curriculum is at an earlier stage of development. In these

subjects, pupils are beginning to achieve the skills and knowledge they need for the future. In art, for example, pupils have recently learned about sculpture. As part of this, Year 6 pupils have produced some attractive clay vases. These experiences are new, and pupils are not yet achieving as highly as they do in English and mathematics.

Leaders provide high-quality training for teachers. They ensure that teachers have the subject knowledge they need to teach well. For example, leaders have recently trained teachers to teach collage, sculpture and digital art. As a result, teachers are confident to teach these skills and feel well supported. They have the expertise to develop pupils as artists. Staff are expert teachers of reading. Pupils develop a love of reading and challenge themselves to read demanding books. Pupils achieve high standards in national reading assessments at both key stage 1 and key stage 2.

Teachers enrich pupils' learning by providing practical experiences which develop pupils' understanding effectively. For example, Year 3 pupils have recently learned how to use compass directions and grid references with maps. They planned walks in the local area using this knowledge. They then walked the routes they had prepared. As a result, they understand how to use maps in real life. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, play a full part in the many opportunities on offer, including trips to France.

Pupils are keen to learn and behave well in lessons. This means that all pupils learn confidently and well. Parents and carers very much appreciate the orderly and caring environment staff provide. Many describe the school as 'fantastic'. One parent said: 'It not only develops children academically, but personally. They become self-disciplined, confident and willing to have a go.'

Staff provide well for the needs of pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In reading, pupils are well supported to keep up and very few fall behind. Staff adapt activities so that these pupils can take part in the curriculum fully. Staff design support to meet the needs of each individual. As a result, they learn well.

The curriculum in the early years is effective and well resourced. There are lots of opportunities for children to develop early number and counting skills. For example, children learn to count out amounts based on throws of the dice. Many can add together two amounts. Staff develop important skills through teaching and through play. Staff are well trained to teach phonics. Children quickly learn to read and write simple sentences. They use their knowledge of sounds well. Children settle quickly in Reception and parents appreciate the care staff give.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong culture of safeguarding throughout the school. All staff are fully aware of their responsibilities. They are vigilant and follow the school's procedures. They know what to look out for when a child might be at risk of harm. Staff know the risks posed to pupils online. The designated safeguarding lead ensures that staff

training is up to date. She keeps meticulous records of actions she has taken in response to concerns raised by staff or parents.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have established an ambitious curriculum that clearly sets out the progression of knowledge and skills in all subjects. Leaders have also ensured that teachers are well trained to teach the curriculum. In the subjects where the curriculum is more established, pupils are achieving highly, for example in English and mathematics. In subjects where the curriculum has been more recently strengthened, such as art and geography, pupils are not yet reaching the same high standards. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum in these subjects becomes embedded, so that pupils can achieve highly in all subjects.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	118768
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10122272
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Margaret McAleese
Headteacher	Isabel Quinn
Website	http://www.our-ladys.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 May 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- Our Lady's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in June 2017.
- Our Lady's is part of the Dartford Area Schools' Consortium (DASCo). DASCo is a charitable organisation of schools which work in partnership to provide training, challenge and support to each other.

Information about this inspection

- I held meetings with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, the chair of governors and three other members of the governing body.
- I held a discussion with the school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, art and geography. When focusing on these subjects, I held discussions with the subject leaders responsible for the subjects, looked at pupils' work, including the work of pupils with SEND, and held discussions with pupils and teachers. I visited art lessons in several year groups. I visited several

lessons in the early years, including reading and mathematics. I heard pupils read from all year groups and discussed their reading with them.

- I inspected safeguarding by reviewing the arrangements for pre-appointment checks carried out by the school, including the school's single central record of these checks. I spoke to staff about their training and understanding of the school's safeguarding procedures. I held discussions with the designated safeguarding lead and reviewed case files and records held by the school, including records of staff training.
- I held discussions with parents at the start of the school day. I considered 31 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire Parent View, and 31 free-text comments. I considered 34 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. I held discussions with pupils from several year groups. I considered 22 responses to Ofsted's staff survey and I held discussions with staff about their work.

Inspection team

Peter Wibroe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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