

# Inspection of a good school: La Fontaine Academy

Nightingale Lane, Bickley, Bromley, Kent BR1 2SQ

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Inspection dates:

13 and 14 March 2023

## Outcome

La Fontaine Academy continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a graded (section 5) inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a graded inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders promote the school's motto 'Always aiming higher, together' very well. They have high expectations for all pupils in the school. Pupils are extremely proud of their school and happy here. They are enthusiastic, polite and hardworking.

Leaders have high aspirations for what pupils can achieve. The curriculum is extremely ambitious and pupils enjoy being challenged. Pupils practise their language skills through various whole school activities. For example, the 'French Café' and during the European day of languages.

The behaviour of pupils is exemplary, both in lessons and around the school site. Leaders ensure that all pupils in the school are kept safe. Pupils have many trusted adults to talk to. Incidents of bullying are extremely rare and leaders address these effectively when they occur.

Pupils have access to a wide range of extra opportunities in the school, including various visits and clubs. These include sports clubs, music ensembles and yoga. Leaders encourage pupils to take on responsibilities. There are also a range of committees that pupils can join including the 'eco' and student council.

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

Leaders have designed a broad and balanced curriculum that is ambitious for all. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders' curricular thinking is highly developed and in places exceeds the expectations of the national curriculum. For instance, all pupils in the school, including in Reception, study French. This curriculum takes pupils well beyond the scope of the national curriculum.

Leaders identify pupils with SEND quickly. They work closely with a range of specialists to meet these pupils' needs. Teachers ensure that pupils with SEND receive exceptional support to help them achieve highly.

Leaders make sure that the curriculum for all subjects builds knowledge over time progressively. They assure that pupils revisit key knowledge and skills regularly. This helps pupils to develop deep subject-specific understanding. Teachers help pupils to access future content with increased complexity. For example, in mathematics, pupils in Year 2 learned about fractions before telling the time. This helped them to identify quarter and half in a clock confidently.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge and deliver content clearly. They use a variety of strategies to check pupils' understanding. All teachers have an excellent understanding of what pupils have learned previously. Teachers check pupils' knowledge systematically before moving on to new content. They identify and address any gaps and misconceptions in pupils' understanding swiftly.

Leaders have a sharp focus on pupils learning to read from when they first join the school. They use pupils' assessment information very carefully to identify any pupil who is falling behind the pace of the phonics programme. Leaders make sure that pupils who struggle with their reading receive highly effective support to help them catch up. This helps pupils to read with confidence. Teachers support pupils to segment and blend sounds accurately. They read to pupils regularly. Teachers ensure that books are well selected, and pupils thoroughly enjoy story times.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. Teachers are highly skilled to manage pupils' behaviour, so that disruptions in lessons are very rare. Leaders have clear systems in place to support all pupils, so that behaviour across the school is impeccable.

Leaders support pupils' broader development very well. They ensure that pupils are taught to be safe, healthy and happy. Teachers encourage pupils to treat everyone, regardless of background, with respect. Pupils develop essential knowledge and skills in an engaging and age-appropriate manner.

All pupils have access to a wide range of visits, which all link to what pupils learn. These include visits to a variety of museums, a Hindu temple, and the local library. Leaders support pupils' positive mental health in a variety of ways. This includes through a highly effective pastoral system and working with external agencies. Pupils enjoy visits from the 'well-being' dog.

Leaders look after the health and welfare of staff. They are conscious of the pressures of workload and explore strategies to minimise this where possible. Staff well-being is supported well.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Staff are well trained and vigilant in identifying and reporting concerns. Leaders work with a range of external agencies to ensure pupils receive the support that they need.

Leaders take swift action to address any emerging safeguarding matters. Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe and they understand how to report any concerns.

## 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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2017.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140999
<b>Local authority</b>	Bromley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10240363
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy Free School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	411
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of Trustees
<b>Chair of trustees</b>	Rama Venchard
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Tirrell
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lafontaineacademy.org">www.lafontaineacademy.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 and 8 June 2017

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, and a range of staff. He also met with members of the governing body and trust.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, French and mathematics. For each deep dive the inspector spoke to subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, discussed with pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work. The curriculum in other subjects was also considered.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding leads, along with pupils and staff. The records of pre-employment checks and other relevant documentation were also reviewed.

- The inspector considered the views of parents, pupils, and staff, including through responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Simon Conway, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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