

Inspection of a good school: St Fidelis Catholic Primary School

Bexley Road, Erith, Kent DA8 3HQ

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 April 2023

Outcome

St Fidelis Catholic Primary School 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?

Pupils are proud of their school and excited about their learning. Leaders provide an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. The school's key values thread throughout school life. For instance, pupils are encouraged to show compassion in their understanding of the beliefs and views of others. They arrange charity events to help support the local community. Pupils are polite and articulate.

Pupils are happy and feel safe at school. They know that they have trusted adults with whom they can share any concerns. Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, which is evident in lessons. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. Teachers ensure that pupils are focused and engaged.

Leaders provide excellent enrichment opportunities for pupils' personal development. All pupils learn to play a range of instruments. Leaders encourage pupils to develop their skills and talents. Pupils are proud to represent their school in sporting competitions and concerts. Many pupils attend the wide range of clubs on offer. Teachers encourage pupils to take on different responsibilities. For example, 'ambassadors' work with school leaders to promote pupils' rights. 'Sports leaders' arrange and organise sporting activities during playtimes. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their school trips and the learning gained from them.

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

Leaders ensure that all pupils access a broad and rich curriculum. Leaders have a detailed understanding of what they want pupils to know. Pupils achieve highly. Leaders plan the curriculum very carefully to build on pupils' prior knowledge. Subject leaders provide high levels of support to teachers. This helps to develop staff's expertise and very strong subject knowledge.

Teachers support pupils to revisit and embed important knowledge regularly. For example, Year 4 pupils compared views on the life and customs of women in Elizabethan times to Ancient Egypt. In the early years, leaders have identified the key foundation skills and knowledge that children need. In mathematics, children gain a secure understanding of number and apply that knowledge confidently. For instance, Nursery children counted coins in the pet shop independently and accurately.

Teachers check and address any misconceptions in pupils' understanding. In early years, adults develop children's communication and language skills very well. They model new words carefully so that children broaden their vocabulary. This helps pupils across the school to be highly confident with subject-specific language. Teachers encourage pupils to explain their learning. For example, in mathematics, Year 6 pupils solved fraction problems using the correct terminology. When required, teachers provide targeted support to pupils who need extra help.

Leaders prioritise early reading and ensure that all staff receive training. This helps staff to teach phonics consistently well. Teachers quickly identify pupils who need extra help with reading. They provide expert help which supports pupils to read confidently. Teachers encourage pupils to continue to develop a love of reading throughout the school through shared reading and events. They choose high-quality texts which challenge and inspire pupils.

Staff support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to access the same learning as their peers. Teachers adapt lessons appropriately to meet these pupils' needs. This includes the effective use of resources to help pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Teachers help pupils to understand the expectations for behaviour. Leaders maintain high standards for pupils' behaviour. They support pupils to build positive relationships with adults and each other. In early years, staff encourage children to take turns and share resources respectfully. Playtimes here are a positive experience. Pupils play with their friends happily.

Leaders have thought carefully about how to develop pupils' character. Teachers help pupils to listen to each other and to express their views confidently. They provide pupils with many opportunities to contribute to the wider community. Leaders have high aspirations for pupils' future options, such as through 'careers days'. The school is a welcoming place where everyone is valued.

The governing body plays an active role in the leadership of the school. It knows the school's priorities very well and provides strong direction. Staff value the support they receive from leaders and the sense of teamwork.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have robust systems in place to support vulnerable pupils. They work closely with external agencies to ensure the best outcomes for pupils. Leaders provide all staff with thorough training. Staff are confident to identify and help pupils who need support.

Leaders provide pupils with many opportunities to learn about how to stay safe. Older pupils work with external speakers to understand about safety in the community. Teachers help pupils to understand the importance of staying safe online. Pupils know that if they have any worries an adult in school will help them.

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 February 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

Unique reference number	101458
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10211331
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	459
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Brother James Boner
Headteacher	Mark Hannon
Website	www.st-fidelis.bexley.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	31 January and 1 February 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school had its last section 48 inspection in May 2017.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative providers.

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 executive headteacher, the head of school, other leaders and a range of staff. They also met with members of the governing body and spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. Activities included discussions with leaders and teachers about the curriculum, visiting lessons, speaking with groups of pupils about their learning and a scrutiny of pupils' work. The inspector considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspector checked the school's policies and records, including those related to behaviour and pupils' wider development.

- The inspector considered responses of pupils, parents and staff to Ofsted’s online surveys.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with leaders with responsibility for safeguarding and considered safeguarding documents and records. These included the school’s records and plans for supporting pupils who have been referred to outside agencies.
- The inspector held meetings with staff and spoke with pupils during social times. They observed pupils’ behaviour across the school, including as they arrived and left school.

Inspection team

Sacha Husnu-Beresford, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

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