

Inspection of La Fontaine Academy

Nightingale Lane, Bickley, Bromley, Kent BR1 2SQ

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 June 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

The headteacher of this school is Michael Tirrell. This school is part of STEP multi-academy trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Paul Glover, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ross Gardner. There is also an executive headteacher, Tim Mills, who is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a friendly and inspiring place to learn where all pupils have the same opportunities to succeed. Pupils and staff are proud of their school. The core values of the trust, which include positivity, aspiration and passion, are clear in all that the school does.

Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. Teaching staff are skilled and use consistent approaches to support pupils with their learning. For example, the sharp focus on the intended learning in each lesson means that teachers can check precisely what pupils have understood.

The school has high expectations for pupils in all areas of their learning. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They show mature attitudes towards their studies. Pupils understand their responsibility to behave with kindness and respect. They are kept safe and feel safe in school.

The school offers numerous opportunities for pupils' broader development. Pupils enjoy taking part in local sports tournaments and performing at events, including music festivals and assemblies. Staff encourage pupils to look after others and to support the local community, such as through charity fundraising.

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

All pupils study a curriculum that goes beyond the breadth and scope of the national curriculum. For example, pupils enjoy studying French from the Reception class onwards. Across the curriculum, pupils develop secure and detailed knowledge, preparing them for the demands of secondary school. Leaders identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) with precision. Staff then make necessary adjustments to help these pupils to learn successfully.

The school focuses on developing pupils' ability to express themselves clearly and consider the views of others. Pupils are given carefully planned opportunities to explore ideas in order to clarify their thinking. This approach helps pupils when they come to record their ideas in writing. Overall, pupils achieve exceptionally high standards and are well prepared for their next steps.

Leaders have considered the knowledge that they want pupils to learn, starting from the early years. The curriculum is well designed and coherent. It builds in regular opportunities for pupils to revisit and recall important knowledge and skills. In mathematics, for example, pupils regularly recap important knowledge such as times tables. Teachers' checks on pupils' understanding are well planned and purposeful. This means that any misconceptions are swiftly corrected. As a result, pupils are secure in the essential knowledge that they need to tackle complex ideas. The impact of this work is evident in the very high outcomes that pupils achieve at the end of Year 6.

Pupils are given the best chance of success. The school prioritises reading from the moment children start in Reception. The approach to early reading is well structured and ambitious. Pupils who need help with reading have additional support. This helps them to keep up with their peers and access the curriculum successfully. Pupils, including those with SEND, develop the knowledge that they need to read confidently and accurately. They are taught to understand the structure of language. This helps pupils to tackle new vocabulary confidently and become more independent as learners.

Pupils enjoy reading, and they have access to a wide variety of high-quality texts. For example, the school has developed a 'literary canon' of classic and modern texts for pupils to read in class. These cover a range of genres and are often linked to their learning in other subjects. For instance, pupils in Year 3 read 'Secrets of the Sun King' as part of their learning in history and geography. This helped them to build their knowledge about Ancient Egypt and deserts.

The school provides staff with well-planned and effective training to support them to deliver the curriculum. This helps teachers to have secure subject knowledge and to deliver the curriculum in line with leaders' expectations. Leaders and governors help staff to manage their workload effectively. They promote staff well-being with great thought and care. One member of staff summed up the view of many colleagues, 'It's the best school I've ever worked in.'

There is a clear and consistent approach to promoting pupils' positive behaviour. This supports the development of high-quality relationships. Pupils know that staff care about their well-being. As a result, the school is a calm and happy place where learning is the priority. Pupils enjoy school, and their attendance rates are high.

Leaders provide a range of cultural experiences to support pupils' personal development. These experiences often link to the wider curriculum. For instance, during 'diversity week', pupils were inspired by visiting speakers discussing their real-world experiences. Staff offer a wide range of after-school activities, including robotics and police cadets. Pupils enjoy attending these.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	140999
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10323400
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	400
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ross Gardner
CEO of the trust	Paul Glover
Headteacher	Michael Tirrell
Website	www.lafontaineacademy.org
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 March 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school is part of STEP multi-academy trust.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior school leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding. They also met with members of the governing body and representatives from the trust.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, modern foreign languages, geography and physical education. These involved discussions with curriculum leaders and teachers, visits to lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils. Other subjects were also considered.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors considered replies to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and to the online surveys for pupils and staff.

Inspection team

David Boyle, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Lando Du Plooy	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Wright	His Majesty's Inspector
Kieran Bird	His Majesty's Inspector

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