

St Fidelis Catholic Primary School

Bexley Road, Erith, Kent DA8 3HQ

Inspection dates

31 January–1 February 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher provide inspirational leadership. Leaders at all levels, including governors, are highly effective. They have high expectations and are precise in their evaluation of the actions they need to take to improve the school further.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have put the right actions in place to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and improving. Standards are rising.
- Teachers and teaching assistants benefit from the excellent training and support they receive from leaders. Staff are highly committed to improving their skills constantly to benefit pupils. They learn from leaders and from each other.
- The teaching of writing is a strength of the school. Pupils who are currently in the school make rapid progress and achieve very high standards in writing in their English lessons.
- Pupils enjoy a rich, broad curriculum. The teaching of music, sports and art is particularly strong. Pupils achieve very well in these areas. The curriculum is underpinned by the excellent work the school does to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they have achieved standards that are above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Good teaching has ensured that disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well.
- The early years provision is outstanding. Children make a flying start to school life. They make excellent progress from their starting points because of the very high quality of teaching and care that they receive.
- The teaching of reading and mathematics is good and leads to strong progress for most pupils. In mathematics, pupils occasionally fail to make good progress because the tasks they work on are either too easy or too difficult.
- Pupils' writing in subjects other than English is not consistently of the high standard achieved in English work.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. Pupils behave well around the school and are polite and friendly. Pupils feel safe and happy at school. The majority of parents agree that pupils are well cared for. Any bullying incidents are dealt with swiftly. Occasionally, low-level disruption in lessons has an impact on the progress that pupils make.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - the tasks set for pupils and the tasks that are selected by pupils in mathematics are at the right level of challenge to help them to make rapid progress
 - the standard of writing achieved in English work is reflected in other subjects across the curriculum
 - incidents of low-level disruption in lessons are reduced.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the governors have secured highly effective leadership at all levels since the previous inspection. The headteacher has a strong presence around the school. He ensures that staff and pupils feel valued and safe. Leaders at all levels share an incisive knowledge of the school's strengths and are very clear about what they need to do to improve the school further.
- Leaders, collectively, have high expectations and have created a culture of 'can do' across the school. Pupils are proud of the school and of their achievements. The 'Rights Respecting' ethos underpins the work of the school, as does the school's work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. British values are promoted well. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about their celebration of the Queen's birthday. They show tolerance, respect and empathy when they consider the plight of homeless people. Year 6 pupils skilfully captured these emotions in writing entitled, 'In their shoes'.
- Pupils benefit from a rich, diverse curriculum both during and beyond the school day. There is a sharp emphasis on the development of reading, writing and mathematical skills and knowledge, but pupils also enjoy and achieve well in a wide range of other subjects. The sports curriculum is a particular strength. Teachers work with the highly skilled specialist sports teacher who is employed by the school. As a result, pupils take part in a range of sports in and beyond school. A unique feature of the sports curriculum is the partnership working between teachers. Class teachers observe their pupils taking part in sports lessons. They observe and assess their pupils' skills while developing their own teaching skills at the same time. Music and art are also very strong aspects of the curriculum and pupils achieve very well indeed in these subjects.
- Leaders and governors target the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils carefully and effectively. For example, reading interventions and mathematics catch-up sessions clearly are having a good impact on the progress that disadvantaged pupils make. Leaders evaluate the impact of the funding thoroughly. As a result, any remaining differences in the progress that disadvantaged pupils make in relation to other pupils nationally are diminishing.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is managed well. Leaders have sought external advice to help them strengthen further the good support they offer to pupils. As a result, these pupils make similar good progress to their classmates and to all pupils nationally.
- Leaders ensure that they manage the performance of teachers rigorously. Teachers, including those who are new to the profession, feel well supported by leaders to meet the targets that they are set. The innovative approach to professional development introduced by leaders, which consists of teachers and teaching assistants working in 'trios' to improve their practice, is having a strong impact on improving the quality of teaching further.

- Leaders responsible for developing reading, writing and mathematics across the school are highly skilled specialists in their areas of responsibility. They are incisive and accurate in their judgements about the quality of teaching. They are supporting staff to improve their skills constantly and consistently to benefit pupils. They provide excellent training and support to teachers and teaching assistants. The impact of their work is clear; the quality of teaching is improving.
- Leaders and governors have invested in the outstanding forest school provision in the grounds of the local church. Pupils benefit greatly from exploring the woodland habitat and environment. Leaders responsible for developing this aspect of the school's work have created a unique learning experience for their pupils.
- The majority of parents who completed the online questionnaire were happy with the school and would recommend it to other families.

Governance of the school

- Governance is a great strength of the school. Highly skilled governors hold leaders to account rigorously in all aspects of school improvement. Since the previous inspection, governors have committed a huge amount of time to improving their skills further. As a result they have secured the Governor Mark.
- Governors have an incisive knowledge of the school. They visit regularly and work extremely effectively with leaders to help steer the strategic direction of the school. Governors have a range of skills and expertise which they put to good use in their roles as governors.
- Governors monitor the spending of additional funding closely and ask challenging questions about its use and its impact on pupils' progress. They have detailed, accurate knowledge about the strengths of the school and they have an ambitious vision for its future. As well as providing appropriate challenge to leaders, they also provide constant support and care for all the staff and pupils in the school. They help to make the school a caring, happy community.
- Governors are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding and they make sure that they keep up to date with current guidance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work tirelessly and effectively to keep their pupils safe. They ensure that staff react promptly and rigorously to any concerns about the well-being of pupils. Staff know that 'everything else can wait' if there is a concern about a child.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have incisive knowledge of individual pupils who are vulnerable or in need. They make sure that they challenge external agencies to get the right sort of help and support for pupils. They keep meticulous records with regards to safeguarding children.
- Leaders make sure that all staff receive regular training in all aspects of safeguarding such as radicalisation and extremism. Crucially, they ensure that staff use the training well to inform their vigilance in keeping children safe.

- Leaders and governors ensure that the checks made on the suitability of staff are effective and meet requirements.
- Leaders work well with the local authority and the school provides support to other local schools.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and leads to good outcomes for pupils. Teachers and teaching assistants work hard continually to improve their skills. They reflect on the high-quality training and support they receive and consequently improve their skills.
- As a result of the impact of the work of subject leaders, the teaching of writing in English lessons is a great strength across the school. Teachers typically use high-quality literature to stimulate purposes and ideas for writing. For example, Year 6 pupils produced writing that was of a much higher standard than expected for their age, in response to reading 'War Horse'. In Year 1, pupils produced exceptionally good writing in response to the teacher's highly skilled explanation of the use of imperative verbs to write instructions.
- The teaching of reading is good and improving. The teaching of phonics is strong and leads to outcomes that are well above the national average in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. Pupils across the school benefit from a range of opportunities to develop their comprehension skills and to apply their phonic knowledge. The most able readers read with confidence and fluency. The least able readers are given appropriate resources and support to help them make good progress. Teachers are receiving support from leaders to make sure that they select texts which are pitched precisely at the right level to help pupils make even stronger progress.
- Strong teaching alongside well-targeted additional support has ensured that any differences between the progress that disadvantaged pupils make in comparison with all pupils nationally are diminishing in all subjects.
- Teachers and support staff are skilled in supporting pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to make good progress.
- Pupils benefit from excellent teaching in the forest school provision. They explore nature and apply skills from a range of subjects during their weekly sessions at this exciting, innovative provision. The teacher responsible for leading this provision creates a stimulating, inspiring environment which enables pupils to develop a range of skills as well as developing their sense of community spirit.

- The teaching of mathematics is good and improving as a result of good support and professional development from leaders. Teachers have implemented successfully the new mathematics curriculum to ensure that most pupils make good progress and some make rapid progress. Occasionally, when pupils are given the opportunity to select the task that they work on, they choose tasks which are either too difficult or too easy. Sometimes teachers fail to pick up on this quickly enough. When this happens, it means that the most able pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable and that the least able pupils who need help with learning do not receive it immediately. 'Turn around' sessions aim to help pupils fill any gaps in learning identified in books, but for some pupils this means that learning time in lessons is lost and they do not receive the support they need when learning is taking place.
- Pupils benefit from being taught a wide range of subjects. The quality of the art work across the school is excellent. Pupils make very strong progress in a range of sports and they perform to a high standard in music lessons. Leaders recognise that while writing in English books is of a very high standard, this is not reflected when pupils write in other subjects.
- Teachers plan lessons to interest and engage pupils. However, low-level disruption in lessons sometimes has a negative impact on the progress of pupils. Teachers are sometimes unaware that pupils have lost focus or are playing with equipment and not fully concentrating on their learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of pride in their school. Pupils enjoy taking on roles and responsibilities such as that of 'school ambassador'. The school's commitment to being a Rights Respecting school is clear. Pupils respond well to the high expectations placed upon them. They show respect for themselves and for each other.
- Pupils and parents appreciate that achievements are valued and celebrated by the school. Leaders ensure that pupils from all backgrounds have equal opportunities to benefit from all the activities that the school has to offer, both within and beyond the school day.
- The recently introduced meditation time is valued by pupils who strongly believe it helps them with their learning.
- Pupils feel safe at school and trust the adults who work with them. They know that they can seek help if they need it. They appreciate that any bullying incidents are tackled swiftly and effectively by teachers.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.

- Pupils are polite and respectful. Their behaviour around the school building and in the lunch hall is usually good. Sometimes, low-level disruption in lessons affects the progress that pupils make. Occasionally, pupils lose focus and do not concentrate on their learning.
- Behaviour in the playground during the inspection was good. Pupils say that there are sometimes incidents of bullying and detailed school records show that this is the case.
- Attendance is above the national average and this reflects the fact that pupils love to come to school each day.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2016, pupils left Year 6 having achieved standards which were above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall progress was significantly above the national average in writing and in mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils achieved standards above the average for all pupils in reading and mathematics and were broadly in line with the national average in writing. They made average progress across key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils leave St Fidelis well prepared for secondary school.
- Most pupils who are currently in the school are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. In writing, pupils make very rapid progress indeed. There are pockets of weaker progress for some pupils in mathematics. The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not challenged consistently to make the rapid progress of which they are capable. The least able sometimes persevere with tasks that are too difficult for them. This limits the progress that they make. There are still pockets of weaker progress for some disadvantaged pupils, but this is improving because of the incisive actions leaders and governors have taken as a result of the 2016 outcomes.
- Good teaching of phonics has ensured that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check has been well above the national average for the last three years.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and /or disabilities make progress which is similar to that of pupils nationally and within the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is well above the national average. Children make rapid progress from their various starting points. Many children come to the school with skills and knowledge which are at or above the expected level for the age range in literacy and mathematics. From their various starting points, outstanding teaching ensures that children make rapid, sustained progress in all areas of development and leave the early years extremely well placed to enjoy and benefit from the Year 1 curriculum.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- The early years provision is outstanding. The early years leader provides outstanding leadership. She is an excellent teacher and is a role model for the staff whom she manages. Teachers, nursery nurses and teaching assistants ensure that children benefit from teaching which is never less than good. Much of it leads to rapid progress. Children are exceptionally well prepared for their transition to Year 1.
- The learning environment delights, excites and inspires children. Typical of the tasks provided for children was a mathematics activity involving squirting water at numbers to consolidate children's developing knowledge. Children enjoy their activities. Teachers make learning fun.
- Teachers rightly put great emphasis on developing early number, reading and writing skills. As a result of highly skilled teaching, children make rapid progress in these areas of learning. Teachers plan inspiring role-play areas such as 'the police station' or a Chinese restaurant for Chinese New Year. Children apply their developing skills to these interesting imaginary situations. In the nursery, a teacher sat 'ordering' her noodles from a very happy waitress who was taking the order down on her whiteboard. 'So noodles...nnnnn noodles!' With absolute pride and delight, the child works out that 'noodles' begins with the letter 'n' and she busily starts to write the letter 'n' repeatedly on her board, before dashing off to serve her customer.
- Adults carefully track the progress children make in all areas of learning and capture it on their assessment system which they have on a tablet. Parents view the ongoing information gathered by the staff and add comments to it. They also upload pictures to share with the school. This represents excellent partnership working between staff and parents. Parents are highly positive about their children's time in the early years.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged children make similar strong progress from their individual starting points as other children. Teachers know individual children very well. Any slow or weaker progress is identified and provision is adapted to make sure that children receive the support and guidance they need.
- Staff keep children safe and well cared for in the early years. Like the staff throughout the school, they are vigilant in safeguarding children and make swift referrals to the headteacher if they have any concerns.
- Children thrive in the early years as a result of the caring relationships they have with adults. A wonderful speech and language session with a teaching assistant captured this care and the absolute trust children have in the adults who work with them. The teaching assistant gently prompted the children to come and join her. A welcome song including all their names and greeting them warmly ensured that they were happy, comfortable and ready to learn.
- Children demonstrate great pride in their achievements in the early years and they constantly show a desire to learn which has been instilled in them by their teachers. During their time in the forest school, they work collaboratively to solve problems and discover nature. They develop vocabulary because of the good interactions they have with adults.

- Staff in the early years have worked hard to develop their questioning skills to help deepen children's knowledge and understanding. Good questioning was a key feature of the excellent teaching seen during the inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	101458
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10008729

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	471
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Br James Boner
Headteacher	Mark Hannon
Telephone number	01322 337752
Website	www.st-fidelis.bexley.sch.uk
Email address	admin@st-fidelis.bexley.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	17–18 October 2011

Information about this school

- St Fidelis is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for pupil premium funding is below average.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British or Black African background.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- Children in the early years are taught in two full-time Reception classes and two part-time Nursery classes.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes at least twice. Observations were undertaken with the two assistant headteachers, the subject leader for English, the special educational needs coordinator and the early years leader.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body and spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Meetings were held with pupils to discuss their learning and their views on the school. Pupils took inspectors on a 'curriculum tour' of the school.
- Leaders met with inspectors to discuss their roles and the impact of their work.
- The subject leaders for mathematics and for English carried out a book scrutiny with inspectors to see what progress pupils were making. Books from all year groups were analysed.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to pupils in the lunch hall, in lessons, in the playground and as they moved around the building.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documents, including information on pupils' progress across the school, improvement plans, curriculum plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined school records relating to safety and behaviour.
- Inspectors took account of the 53 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and of information gathered from discussions with parents during the inspection.

Inspection team

Ruth Dollner, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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Denise James-Mason	Ofsted Inspector
Sheila Cohring	Ofsted Inspector
Lascelles Haughton	Ofsted Inspector

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