

# Inspection of a good school: St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Kale Road, Thamesmead, Erith, Kent DA18 4BA

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Inspection dates:

13–14 November 2019

## **Outcome**

St John Fisher Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are proud to attend their school. They see themselves as being part of one big happy family who never lets the day end on a disagreement. Leaders meet and greet pupils and families each morning with genuine warmth. Parents and carers value how staff look after their children. Pupils spoke about the strong relationships that exist across the school community. As a result, pupils are confident and self-assured by the time they move on to secondary school.

All pupils achieve well here. Teachers prepare interesting lessons which develop and deepen pupils' knowledge. Pupils appreciate the high expectations that their teachers have of them.

Pupils have a wide range of opportunities to broaden their horizons. They enjoy taking part in a variety of sporting activities and love competing in and winning local tournaments. They also visit museums, galleries and even the beach. These outings enrich pupils' learning by building on what they have studied in class.

Pupils behave very well. The atmosphere in school is friendly and purposeful. Pupils feel safe here. Bullying is a rare occurrence. Pupils are confident that staff will sort out bullying quickly if it does happen.

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

Leaders want every pupil to leave school with the attributes and knowledge that they need to be successful in the future. To achieve this aim, leaders have improved the way each subject is planned and taught. Since the previous inspection, they have looked closely at what pupils need to learn in subjects such as history and science. Planning has been updated so that teachers are clear about what they should teach and when. Teachers use and adapt this planning effectively. This means that teaching enables pupils to know more and remember more as they move from one year group to the next. Pupils achieve well in a range of subjects.

Leaders are ambitious. They know where further improvements to the quality of education could be made. For instance, they are supporting teachers to plan tasks which encourage pupils to think deeply and critically about important concepts. In most subjects, this is working well, particularly in the early years. For example, teachers choose activities so that children can use what they know to find their own solutions to problems. However, more work is needed in Years 1 to 6, particularly in history. Sometimes, teaching does not build purposefully on what pupils already know. This holds pupils back from deepening their understanding.

When planning subjects, leaders aim to provide pupils with experiences that 'bring learning to life'. These experiences encourage pupils to be curious and ask questions. Leaders also consider carefully the essential cultural opportunities they want pupils to have. Leaders are refining plans to ensure that these opportunities are provided across all subjects.

The well-planned programme for the teaching of phonics gets younger pupils off to a strong start in reading. Children begin learning phonics as soon as they join the Reception class. They try hard and clearly enjoy their phonics sessions. Children quickly learn how to use their knowledge of letters and sounds to help them to read and write. Alongside this, staff introduce and revisit new words and phrases carefully. This approach is effective in supporting children's language development.

Pupils love reading and develop into confident readers. Most pupils read regularly at home. Reception children take home books to read straight away. This helps them to practise what they have learned in school. Pupils enthuse about their favourite authors and enjoy talking about the kinds of books that they like to read.

Pupils behave well in classrooms, including in the early years. Their positive attitudes mean that they and their teachers can get on with their work. Pupils respect adults and each other. They learn about different cultures and beliefs. Pupils also have many opportunities to learn about how they can help their community. For instance, pupils collect food and household items for charity as part of their harvest festival.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) take full advantage of all the school has to offer. They achieve well. Staff have the expertise to ensure that pupils with SEND learn successfully. As a result, these pupils thrive and achieve well across all subjects.

Leaders make the well-being of staff a priority. Leaders and governors provide staff with effective support to help them manage their workload. Staff value this. They also appreciate the high-quality training and guidance that leaders provide.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils are safe at this school. Staff have thorough and regular training. They understand what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's well-being. Leaders and staff keep safeguarding records up to date and deal with any worries quickly and effectively.

Leaders have thought about particular risks in the local area. Pupils learn how to stay safe, including when playing outdoors after school and when online. Staff work together successfully with families and local agencies to make sure that pupils get extra help when they need it.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Leaders have introduced new subject planning for science, geography, history and modern foreign languages. This planning maps out what pupils should learn and the sequence they should learn it in. Leaders and staff are ambitious in their choices for what pupils should know and be able to do. These well-considered changes bolster an already effective curriculum. However, in subjects such as history, leaders should make sure that teaching is sharply focused on introducing pupils to the right content at the right time. This, along with the well-considered wider cultural experiences, will enable pupils to remember and retain important knowledge and concepts.

## **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 first section 8 inspection since we judged St John Fisher Catholic Primary School to be good on 15 March 2016.

## **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 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 101460   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Bexley   |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10110480   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 206  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Ms P Osobase   |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Miss Sarah Griffin   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.sjf.bexley.sch.uk">www.sjf.bexley.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 15 March 2016  |

## Information about this school

- The school admits 30 pupils in each year group from Reception to Year 6.
- The school has a Roman Catholic ethos and was inspected under section 48 of the Education Act in 2019.

## Information about this inspection

- I looked in detail at reading, science and history. This involved talking to subject leaders, visiting lessons, looking at pupils' work, hearing pupils read, and talking to pupils and teachers. I also considered other subjects as part of this inspection.
- I met with the headteacher, both assistant headteachers and the special educational needs coordinator.
- I met with the chair of the governing body and one other governor.
- I looked at the single central record and other documents related to safeguarding, and talked to staff and pupils. I also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for pupils, staff and parents.
- I visited all classrooms, including in the early years. I observed pupils' behaviour throughout the school day, in assembly and as they moved around the school.

## **Inspection team**

Karen Matthews, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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