

Inspection of St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

Kale Road, Thamesmead, Erith, Kent DA18 4BA

Inspection dates:	21 and 22 January 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love coming to this school. They feel safe and cared for. They are also committed to caring for each other. Within the school's distinctive nurturing ethos, pupils are proud to learn values such as 'hope' and 'courage'. When describing life at this school, pupils speak with unreserved praise for its kind and welcoming atmosphere. One pupil summed this up using words displayed in the school hall, 'Love for all, hatred for none.'

The school strives for the highest standards. Pupils rise to this. They concentrate and work hard in lessons. They are not deterred when things go wrong. Pupils show resilience and determination to succeed. This helps all pupils to achieve highly and produce work to an extremely high standard across the curriculum.

Adults trust pupils to take responsibility for their behaviour. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. Pupils have no concerns about bullying. They are confident that any issues would be fairly and properly dealt with.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They trust leaders and staff to make the right choices for their children. One parent, reflecting the views of many, commented, 'This is an excellent school where children are nurtured and feel loved.'

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

Pupils achieve consistently high results in national tests, with some achieving above the standards expected for their age. As well as academic success, pupils develop strong values. They become well-rounded individuals who are exceptionally well prepared for their lives beyond primary school.

The curriculum is exceedingly well thought through in all subjects. The school has identified the precise knowledge and skills that pupils should learn. They recap and revisit previous learning to help them to remember and then apply it. For example, in science, younger pupils learn how to work like scientists, putting the results of experiments into tables. Meanwhile, older pupils develop their understanding by planning and recording experiments independently, for example when finding out about the impact of exercise on the heart.

Pupils love reading. They enjoy lots of different books and stories. They learn to read from the moment they start school. Teachers are skilled at teaching pupils letters and the sounds that they make. This helps pupils to read unfamiliar words accurately and tackle increasingly difficult books. Pupils at risk of falling behind their peers are identified quickly and given extra teaching to catch up swiftly.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They explain new information clearly. They give pupils precise guidance and support on how to improve their work. They deliver interesting and exciting learning activities that help pupils to build and apply knowledge

confidently. For example, in art, pupils enjoy skilfully applying their knowledge of different materials to design a mask and a headdress to take part in a carnival.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive excellent support. Their needs are clearly identified. Staff adapt lessons and provide equipment to help them access the curriculum. For example, task management boards help pupils break down and complete complicated tasks independently.

Children get off to a great start in the early years. They quickly settle and become confident learners. Adults develop children's early language effectively, for instance by modelling how to use words and encouraging children to speak in full sentences. However, occasionally, in the early years, children are not taught the precise knowledge and vocabulary that will be most helpful to prepare them for their next steps in learning.

Pupils make a deeply meaningful contribution to the life of the school and community. Older pupils help younger pupils with their reading. They also help to resolve issues in the playground. Members of the school council and pupil faith leaders meet with the governing body. They actively contribute to discussions about the school. Pupils understand the importance of charity. They are particularly proud of their recent visit to a local care home to read stories and sing songs. Pupils learn to show care and compassion to others. This is clear in the way they conduct themselves throughout the school day. Pupils' attitudes to learning and wider school life are exceptional.

The school provides many exciting opportunities beyond the curriculum to develop pupils' character and outlook on the world. These include junior citizenship day, virtual reality workshops and training in first aid. Pupils benefit from a range of clubs and activities that nurture their interests, such as drama, sewing and football.

Attendance is high because pupils value coming to school. The school provides carefully considered support for families and pupils where attendance may be a concern.

Staff are deeply committed to the school. They say they feel part of a family here. Staff fully support leaders to ensure pupils receive the best possible education. They say that leaders are supportive, approachable and make sure that workload is manageable.

Governors know the school well. They ensure funding is used to remove barriers for disadvantaged pupils. They work effectively with leaders to provide pupils with exceptional opportunities for learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- On occasions, the curriculum in the early years does not precisely identify the important knowledge and vocabulary that children need to learn across the areas of learning. In some cases, children are not as prepared as they could be for their learning in key stage 1. The school should ensure the knowledge and vocabulary it wants children to learn is precisely identified so all children are helped to be fully ready to learn the curriculum in Year 1.

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	101460
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10345734
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Esther Phillips
Headteacher	Sarah Griffin
Website	www.sjf.bexley.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	13 and 14 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Information about this school

- This is a Roman Catholic school under the Archdiocese of Southwark.
- The most recent section 48 inspection, for a school of a religious character, took place in April 2024. The next section 48 inspection is due in 2029.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic

began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and looked at a range of evidence from other subjects, including history, geography and science.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour throughout the day, in lessons and around the school, including breaktimes and lunchtime.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and curriculum leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and held discussions with representatives from the local authority and diocese.
- Inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils and staff. They took into account the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the online staff and pupil surveys.
- 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.

Inspection team

Andrew Rigby, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Brian Simber

Ofsted Inspector

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