Inspection of Our Lady's Catholic Primary School, Dartford

King Edward Avenue, Dartford, Kent DA1 2HX

Inspection dates:	17 and 18 June 2025
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Expectations are high at this vibrant and inclusive school. Pupils strive to meet these expectations and are well supported to do so successfully. They work hard and attain highly. Pupils' outcomes in national curriculum tests, which are well above average, reflect this.

Pupils throw themselves wholeheartedly into everything on offer, whether singing enthusiastically or playing team games. They are keen to do well and have a thirst for knowledge. Pupils celebrate and are inspired by each other's achievements, sometimes bursting into spontaneous applause when others are successful.

Pupils are considerate of each other. Staff model this. Relationships are warm, good humoured and mutually respectful. Pupils feel cared for and safe. They say that teachers make their learning fun and are kind. Pupils behave well. Staff help them to understand what is expected by the school's 'behaviour blueprint'. Pupils value the recognition in assembly and the certificates they can earn as a result of demonstrating positive behaviours.

Pupils relish the opportunity of contributing to the wider life of the school through taking on roles of responsibility. They discharge their tasks as play leaders or prefects diligently and proudly wear the badges signifying these roles.

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

The school has ensured that an ambitious curriculum is in place that builds the knowledge pupils need to know across a broad range of subjects from Year 1 to Year 6. The early years curriculum in Reception is well set out to help children reach early learning goals. Despite this, the school has not ensured that the curriculums in early years and key stage 1 connect cohesively. As a result, children do not always have the knowledge they need to build on as they move on to key stage 1.

Reading is firmly at the heart of the curriculum. Pupils learn to read quickly and well. Phonics is taught systematically from Reception. Pupils swiftly grasp key phonics knowledge. Reading books are well matched so that pupils can apply their learning successfully. Any pupils who find learning to read more difficult or who start to fall behind are carefully identified and given the help they need to catch up.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. This helps them to deliver the curriculum clearly. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are quickly identified and given the support they need to access the learning successfully alongside their peers. All pupils benefit from a sharp focus on identifying, understanding and using technical and subject-specific vocabulary. This helps pupils to explain their thinking and to write well across subjects. Expectations of presentation are high. Pupils take pride in their work.

Teachers check on the knowledge that pupils remember and understand. Sometimes, however, they miss opportunities to either address misconceptions or deepen pupils thinking. As a result, some pupils do not learn as well as they could.

Pupils like coming to school. They attend well and understand the importance of punctuality. They skip excitedly into school when the gates open and greet staff and each other with a cheery 'good morning'. Pupils are polite and engaging. Well-established routines help ensure that the school is an orderly environment.

The school provides a breadth of opportunities for pupils' wider development. Pupils benefit from learning outside the classroom and enjoy time up close with the natural world. This ranges from gardening club or planting seeds in Reception, through to hands-on experiences with animals. Themed trips provide pupils with the excitement of new places and experiences, such as dipping their toes in the sea. Clubs are organised so that all pupils undertake some form of enrichment on a Thursday. There are then additional clubs that the pupils self-organise at lunchtimes. These help to develop pupils' broader interests.

Pupils are taught about the school's values and their importance. They understand about human rights and the importance of equal treatment. Consequently, they feel that school is a place where everyone is treated fairly. Pupils enjoy learning about their wide range of backgrounds through experiences such as the annual culture day, where the school community celebrates different music, food, clothing and experiences from a range of heritages. They learn about being responsible citizens through links with the local care home.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel valued and well supported. Staff appreciate the way in which leaders consult them about policies and changes that impact on their workload, such as planning and marking guidance. This fosters a sense of community in the school. Governors know the school well. They gather information from a range of appropriate sources, which they use effectively to provide both support and challenge. Everyone works well together in the best interests of the school and the wider community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some parts of the school's early years curriculum are not clearly linked with key stage 1 content. At times, this hinders children from building secure foundations for their future learning. The school should further develop links with the key stage 1 curriculum so that pupils can capitalise on what they already know and can do when they leave the early years.

- In some subjects, teachers do not check well enough what pupils remember. Subsequent learning does not take into account pupils' prior knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not build their knowledge well over time. This slows their progress across the curriculum. The school should ensure that teachers check what pupils know and remember across all subjects and use this to inform learning.

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	118768
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10379812
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	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Margaret McAleese
Headteacher	Isabel Quinn
Website	www.our-ladys.kent.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Our Lady's Catholic Primary School is a voluntary aided school within the Archdiocese of Southwark. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in May 2025.
- The school does not currently 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with school leaders. The lead inspector also talked to representatives of the governing body and had telephone conversations with a representative from the Diocese of Southwark and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, music and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects. The lead inspector listened to pupils read as part of the early reading deep dive.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders and staff, and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupil's interests first.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted's online parent survey, Ofsted Parent View. They also considered responses to the online pupil and staff surveys.
- Inspectors talked to staff to gather their views about the school, including their workload and well-being. As well as speaking to pupils during lessons, playtimes and at lunchtime, inspectors met with several groups of unaccompanied pupils.

Inspection team

Deborah Perkins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Daniel Botting	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
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M1 2WD

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