

Inspection of St Anselm's Catholic Primary School

Littlebrook Manor Way, Temple Hill, Dartford Kent DA1 5EA

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are enormously proud of their friendly and vibrant school. They are consistently caring and kind towards each other and show remarkable resilience in their learning. Pupils grow in confidence through the trusting relationships they build with caring staff. 'Bubble-time' provides an opportunity for pupils to talk openly about their worries. This means pupils feel safe, knowing adults will help them overcome challenges.

Pupils exude the attributes that the school has identified within its 'Rainbow Curriculum'. They are proud of the numerous 'pins' awarded to them for completing 'Rainbow Challenges' linked to learning qualities such as 'leadership and confidence'. Many pupils lead clubs at breaktimes so pupils always have a place to make friends. Abundant leadership opportunities mean that pupils have multiple ways to make a tangible contribution to school life. They carry out these roles with impressive responsibility and maturity. Pupils eagerly look forward to regular assemblies where they celebrate each other's successes and achievement.

Staff have high expectations of what pupils will achieve. Pupils are enthusiastic learners and strive to try their best. They enjoy a rich and broad curriculum designed to 'inspire to aspire'. They are proud to talk about their learning and, for the most, they achieve well.

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

The school has a secure understanding of the needs of its pupils and the community it serves. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, leaders developed a diverse and engaging curriculum that identifies and promotes important learning attributes, such as organisation and self-discipline. It carefully identifies the important skills and knowledge that pupils need to know in a sequential way.

The school places a strong emphasis on helping pupils to know and remember more. Teachers routinely check that pupils can remember important topic details and vocabulary. However, in some lessons, teachers do not design learning that enables pupils to make deeper connections between linked ideas. Occasionally, teachers do not ensure that pupils review and improve errors in their work. This means misconceptions are not always fully addressed. Consequently, some pupils struggle to explain their ideas with appropriate complexity.

As soon as children join school in Reception, staff help pupils learn to read and spell using phonics. This support is typically effective, and most children can read and apply their phonics knowledge in their work. Those who need additional support receive help in a timely way. As pupils move through the school years, teachers focus on helping pupils to 'read to learn'. A wide range of well-selected texts enhance pupils' subject knowledge of topics such as learning about the Amesbury Archer. This means pupils quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to become confident, fluent readers.

When pupils join the school, staff quickly identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils with more complex needs receive effective additional

support in the 'Nurture' provision. Here, they learn essential language and communication skills such as using symbols. However, specific strategies to support these pupils are not consistently applied well within mainstream lessons. This limits how well these pupils can access the curriculum and learn. For other pupils with less complex SEND, staff typically provide suitable support that enables these pupils to engage well with lessons.

Children in the early years benefit from caring support from staff who know them well. Staff help children feel settled and pay attention to learning. This enables children to concentrate for extended periods, helping them to practise important skills such as turn-taking and sharing toys. Children learn a curriculum that sparks their curiosity and encourages them to be resilient and inquisitive learners. This prepares them well for future learning.

The school's approach to pupils' personal development is impressive. Pupils develop important life skills they need for future success. Regular opportunities to vote and demonstrate leadership means pupils have a deep understanding of fundamental British values such as democracy. Pupils debate ideas with articulate confidence. They actively listen and respond respectfully to opinions of others. Through 'Culture Club', pupils have a strong awareness of the contribution that influential people have made to the life we live today.

Pupils behave exceptionally well and show impeccable manners towards each other and staff. They attend school regularly as they do not want to miss out on what the school offers them. The school works in partnership with families and professionals to remove barriers to positive engagement with education.

The school continuously strives to provide the best education and care for pupils. It is sharpening its approach to assessment to ensure leaders in the foundation subjects can evaluate the impact of the curriculum. Staff are highly positive about the way the school promotes work-life balance and sense of community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There is variability in how effectively some teachers design learning to help pupils make connections between linked concepts. In addition, assessment approaches in some subjects do not ensure pupils' misconceptions are identified and acted upon. As a result, some pupils do not have the secure knowledge they need when exploring new learning. The school should support all teachers to further refine assessment processes and the design of lesson activities to achieve the ambitious aims of the curriculum in all subjects.

- Sometimes teachers do not make appropriate adjustments that enable pupils with complex SEND to access learning successfully. This means some of these pupils do not always learn as well as they could. The school must ensure that staff have the skills they need so they know how to design learning that enables these pupils to achieve well.

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	118765
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341522
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Daunna Kendall
Headteacher	Laura White
Website	www.st-anselms.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 June 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This Catholic school is part of the Archdiocese of Southwark. The last section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character was carried out in February 2024. The next inspection should take place within eight years of that date.
- 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.

- 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 met with the headteacher and other senior leaders. The lead inspector also met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector also had a meeting with a representative from the local authority and a separate meeting with a representative from the Archdiocese of Southwark.
- The inspection team carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, including the free-text comments. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.
- 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.
- Inspectors reviewed and scrutinised a range of the school's documentation, including leaders' plans for improving the school, minutes of governor meetings and records of attendance and behaviour incidents.

Inspection team

Michelle Payne, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Liz McIntosh

Ofsted Inspector

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Store Street
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