

La Fontaine Academy

Princes Plain, Bromley, Kent BR2 8LD

Inspection dates

7–8 June 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	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher provides calm yet inspirational leadership. He is ably supported by all leaders, governors and by STEP Academy Trust. As a result, the school is good and is improving.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. This is a happy school. Pupils are friendly, highly articulate and confident. Their well-being and safety are the absolute priority of staff. Parents recognise this and are delighted with the work of the school.
- In 2016, standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics were well above the national average. All pupils in Year 1 achieved the expected standard in the phonics check. The proportion of children achieving a good overall level of development at the end of Reception Year was well above average.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Most pupils make good progress from their varying starting points. The teaching of writing is a strength of the school. High-quality talk underpins learning in all subject areas.
- Pupils benefit from a rich, broad curriculum, enhanced by the school's specialist French teaching. The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.
- Pupils behave well at playtimes and when moving around the school. They enjoy 'family dining' at lunchtime and are sociable and polite. In lessons, pupils sometimes become unfocused when tasks set do not meet their needs.
- Early years provision is good. Despite the constraints of the temporary site, teachers ensure they plan well for all areas of learning. Occasionally, children working below age-related expectations struggle with tasks that do not meet their needs.
- The most able pupils do not consistently make strong progress in mathematics because sometimes tasks do not challenge them.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve the attendance and achievement of disadvantaged pupils, but attendance is still poor. As a result, learning time is lost and differences remain between their achievement and that of all pupils nationally.
- Leaders and teachers have ensured that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their classmates. However, provision for these pupils during lessons sometimes fails to meet their needs.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further strengthen teaching, learning and assessment to help all pupils make consistently good progress by ensuring that:
 - best practice is shared across the school
 - the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are set tasks which challenge them, particularly in mathematics
 - provision for children working below age-related expectations in Reception classes consistently meets their needs
 - provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities consistently and effectively meets their needs
 - incidents of low-level disruption in lessons are reduced.
- Continue to take effective action to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher, supported by STEP Academy Trust and the governors, has secured highly effective leadership at all levels. Leaders collectively have an incisive knowledge of the school and its community. They identify the right priorities for improvement and have a shared vision of the school's future. The headteacher is loved and respected within the community. As one parent said, 'Not only does he want our children to have a good education, but he wants them to make the world a better place.'
- Leaders have high expectations for children. The 'STEP Compass' with its values such as, 'we succeed together' underpins the work of the leadership team. Pupils and parents are rightly proud of the school and its achievements. The Rights Respecting ethos and global citizenship are at the heart of the curriculum. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted extremely well. British values such as tolerance and respect are exemplified through all aspects of the school's work. Pupils understand the rules of democracy. This was evident during an assembly which took place on election day, when pupils were encouraged to share and debate the views of the different political parties.
- The curriculum is enhanced by the school's specialism in teaching French. Leaders have a good impact on constantly improving the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. This is particularly evident in the teaching of writing, which is a particular strength across the school. Leaders use their assessment information system intelligently and judiciously to identify pupils who are at risk of not making the progress expected of them. Intervention and catch-up sessions are targeted swiftly and help to accelerate pupils' progress.
- Leaders ensure that the performance management of teachers is rigorous. They never shy away from challenging teachers to improve their skills and are relentless in their drive to ensure that teaching is consistently good.
- Leaders have targeted the physical education and sport premium funding effectively to provide additional swimming lessons, equipment, specialist teaching and opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting events outside the school. It has also supported the development of the curriculum and staff training. As a result, pupils' fitness levels are improving, as well as their understanding of living a healthy life.
- Most parents are extremely happy with the work of the school. Of the 172 parents who completed the online questionnaire, 98% would recommend the school to another family.
- Leaders are creative in their use of homework. Pupils work on 'home projects' with their families, which are celebrated at termly exhibitions in school. The variety and quality of work produced are stunning.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is managed well. These pupils make good progress from their varying starting points. However, occasionally support and provision in classrooms do not meet individual pupils' needs.

- Leaders and governors target the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils thoughtfully and effectively. As a result, differences in the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are diminishing. While leaders have put effective actions in place to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, this remains stubbornly below average and has a negative impact on the progress pupils make. Leaders acknowledge that they must do even more to improve this picture.

Governance of the school

- Governance is a strength of the school and adds to the leadership team's strong capacity to move the school to outstanding. Governors hold leaders to account rigorously for all aspects of school improvement. They have a range of skills which support them in providing strong governance.
- Governors work highly effectively with STEP Academy Trust and school leaders to ensure that plans for the school's future are aspirational and based on the right priorities.
- Governors are well trained in all aspects of safeguarding. They keep up to date with current guidance and act upon it.
- Governors monitor the spending of additional funding and its impact on pupils' progress closely. They keep a careful check on the safer recruitment of staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Keeping children safe lies at the heart of all the school's work. The designated safeguarding leads have a thorough knowledge of individual pupils. They are relentless in their drive to ensure that any vulnerable pupils receive the provision and support they need.
- Leaders are proactive in securing timely support from external agencies for those pupils who need it. They keep meticulous records and ensure that all staff know and use the referral systems and policies which are in place.
- Leaders and staff receive appropriate training and are vigilant in looking for signs of radicalisation, extremism and female genital mutilation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Most pupils make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. As a result of training and support from leaders, the teaching of writing is a great strength of the school. Pupils in all year groups write confidently in a range of text types for a variety of purposes and audiences. Teachers ensure that pupils apply their writing skills across other subjects in the curriculum. Early writers draw on their emerging phonics skills to make good attempts at spelling unknown words.

- Teachers plan interesting, stimulating activities in a range of subjects which pupils enjoy. Pupils enjoy their French lessons and are developing confidence in speaking French. Teaching in all subjects is characterised by a strong focus on speaking and listening. Teachers promote high-quality talk between pupils to help them share ideas and learn from each other.
- The teaching of reading is good and improving because of strong leadership. Pupils tackle new texts with confidence and use their phonics skills well. Teachers are developing their questioning skills to ensure that they help pupils to think deeply and understand what they are reading. Occasionally, the most able pupils are given texts which do not challenge them sufficiently to help them make rapid progress.
- Teachers have worked hard to implement the school's mathematics scheme. As a result, most pupils make good progress. However, the most able pupils are often given work which does not challenge them and this limits the progress that they make. Books show that where teaching is strongest, teachers have strong subject knowledge and this helps them to plan appropriate work. This level of confidence in mathematics subject knowledge is not yet consistent across the school.
- At the end of Year 1, all pupils do very well in the phonics screening check. The teaching of phonics is given a high priority across the early years and key stage 1. When teaching is at its best, teachers confidently introduce new letters and sounds to pupils and help them to apply their new knowledge swiftly to reading and writing. Not all adults teaching phonics demonstrate such confidence and because of this, progress for different groups across the early years and key stage 1 varies.
- The school's assessment information shows that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers over time. However, during lessons, the support they receive is sometimes not effective and the tasks they are set fail to meet their needs appropriately or effectively.
- Occasionally, when teaching is not effective in meeting the needs of all pupils, some pupils lose their focus and this results in some low-level disruption.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of pride and confidence in themselves and in their school. They exemplify the school's values and show themselves to be caring young citizens. They are tolerant and sensitive to the needs of others both within and beyond their school. They take the school's 'charity weeks' extremely seriously and this motivates them to support good causes beyond the school community.
- Pupils never fail to be polite, friendly and welcoming. They are keen to talk about themselves, their teachers and their learning.
- Pupils thrive under the care they receive from all adults in the school. They know that they are well cared for, as do their parents.

- Pupils are kept safe at school and are confident that they can keep themselves safe online and outside school because of the good guidance they receive.
- Pupils say that bullying in the school is extremely rare and they understand the consequences of such behaviour. A small number of pupils who joined La Fontaine from different schools say that this school 'is much safer'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' conduct around the building and in the playground is good. They play happily together. During lunchtimes they enjoy 'family dining' with their teachers. This is a wonderful, social occasion each day. Pupils chat and eat happily with each other and with the staff.
- Pupils' attendance remains below average overall. This is because the attendance of disadvantaged pupils is well below average. During this year, the attendance of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities has improved significantly.
- Pupils generally behave well in lessons, but sometimes incidents of low-level disruption have an impact on their learning.
- Incidents of exclusion and poor behaviour have been significantly reduced this year as a result of appropriate placements being secured for a very small number of pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2016, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was above the national average. The proportion of pupils working at greater depth in all subjects was also above the national average. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils achieving greater depth in reading and writing was below that of all pupils nationally.
- In 2016, all the pupils in Year 1 achieved the expected standard in the phonics screening check. The proportion of children who achieved a good overall level of development in 2016 was well above the national average.
- The school's own information about how well pupils who are currently in the school are doing shows that outcomes will continue to be at least good in 2017.
- Books show that most pupils have made strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics this year. Progress in writing for many pupils has been rapid. However, the progress pupils make in mathematics is more variable. The most able pupils are not currently making the progress of which they are capable because they are not being challenged consistently to achieve the very best that they can. Similarly, some of the most able readers in key stage 1 are not given texts which challenge them sufficiently. This affects the progress that they make.
- In the Reception classes, books show that children who are at the earliest stages of developing number, shape, space and early writing skills are given tasks which they are not yet ready to tackle. This has an impact on the progress that they make.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress over time which is broadly in line with that of their classmates.
- Disadvantaged pupils are currently making similar progress to their peers. Where teaching is strongest, they make strong progress. When teaching does not consistently meet the needs of the most able pupils, the most able disadvantaged pupils also fail to make the rapid progress that they could. The school's summative information about pupils' progress this year shows that differences remain between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and that of all pupils.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years provision is good. Leadership of the early years is strong. Leaders have tackled issues raised by the constraints of the temporary site creatively to ensure that children have access to all areas of learning.
- Children join the Reception Year from a diverse range of settings. They come with knowledge and skills which are broadly typical for their age in most, but not all, areas of learning. From these varying starting points, they make strong progress and the large majority of children achieve a good overall level of development by the end of the Reception Year.
- Relationships between adults and children in the Reception classes are warm and nurturing. Children are safe, secure and happy.
- Teachers focus sharply on developing early reading, writing, number, shape and space, and speaking and listening skills in the early years. As a result, most children who are currently in the Reception classes make good progress in these areas. However, books show that some children are given tasks and worksheets which they struggle with because they are not at the appropriate stage in their development to access these tasks. Assessment information shows that children are given a range of helpful 'concrete' resources to develop and support their thinking and learning, but this is not always reflected in the worksheets that they are given.
- As children develop their early phonic skills, they apply this learning to their reading and writing. Many children in the early years are currently writing at a level which is above that typically seen for their age range.
- While high-quality talk is evident in the strongest teaching seen across the school, in the early years too much of the language is focused on instruction. Adults tend to tell the children what they need to do next instead of helping them to problem solve and decide what needs to be done. Sometimes questioning to deepen children's thinking is limited and often adults repeat what children say, so that they have no real need to listen carefully to each other.

School details

Unique reference number	140999
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	10031684

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Isabelle Dennigan
Headteacher	Dr Sebastien Chapleau
Telephone number	020 8353 4160
Website	www.lafontaineacademy.org
Email address	office@lafontaineacademy.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- La Fontaine Academy is smaller than the average-sized primary school. It opened in September 2014 and currently caters for pupils from Reception to Year 4. The school will expand as children move through the school. The school is due to move to its permanent site in the summer of 2017.
- The school is part of the STEP Academy Trust.
- 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 any other White background. Approximately two thirds of the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- 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.

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education (DfE) guidance on what academies should publish.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes at least twice. Observations were undertaken with the deputy headteacher. Inspectors spoke to members of the governing body and met with representatives of the academy trust. Inspectors spoke to the school's DfE adviser.
- 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.
- Inspectors carried out a book scrutiny to see what progress pupils were making. Books from all year groups were reviewed.
- 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 172 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

Sam Nowak

Ofsted Inspector

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