

St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	124764
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380977
Inspection dates	21–22 March 2012
Lead inspector	Michael Sutherland-Harper

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	304
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nichole Barber
Headteacher	Maria Kemble
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2007
School address	Westgate Street Bury St Edmunds IP33 1QG
Telephone number	01284 755141
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

Inspection team

Michael Sutherland-Harper

Additional inspector

Ann Taylor

Additional inspector

Gay Tattersall

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspection team observed 17 lessons across the school taught by 12 teachers and held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, the school's improvement plan, assessment data, monitoring and self-evaluation records, arrangements for safeguarding and a range of policies and procedures. Inspectors listened to pupils read. In addition to replies from pupil and staff questionnaires, questionnaires from 159 parents and carers were received and analysed.

Information about the school

St Edmund's Catholic Primary School is a larger than average-sized primary school. It takes pupils from a wide area. The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportions of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, are below the national average. The proportions of pupils speaking English as an additional language and from minority ethnic backgrounds are increasing but are below the national average. The school has achieved the Basic Skills and Sports Mark awards. Following the reorganisation of schools in the western area of Suffolk, the school is in the process of exploring possibilities for reorganisation. Pre-school onsite childcare is not managed by the governing body and was inspected separately.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- St Edmund's Catholic Primary School is a good school. Progress rates are good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and curriculum enrichment are strengths. The headteacher, staff and governing body are ambitious for the school. Teaching is good but the school is not yet outstanding because some satisfactory teaching occurs where lessons are teacher dominated. In these lessons, pupil input is more limited and expectations are lower. Sharing of best practice is at an early stage.
- All groups of pupils achieve well across all subjects. Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This progress continues through the school. Pupils take an active part in lessons where they are engaged by the resources and approaches used. Strong support processes effectively meet the learning needs of pupils facing challenges of any sort.
- Behaviour is good. Expectations are clear. Pupils get on well with each other and with adults. Pupils feel safe and parents and carers agree.
- Teaching is good overall. Teaching meets the needs of all groups of pupils, including the more able, the rising number of those who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. The school has focused on improving provision in reading, writing and mathematics for all groups. Books are regularly marked but marking is inconsistent in indicating next steps in learning.
- The headteacher, senior team, staff and governing body work together to ensure continued improvement. Middle managers have refined roles in leading teaching and managing performance. The strong, varied curriculum engages pupils effectively with learning. Tracking and monitoring procedures are rigorous and effective. The governing body offers good support and challenge and has an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement. Communication with parents and carers is good.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching is consistently good or better, with at least a third outstanding, by July 2013 by:
 - encouraging an appropriate blend of teacher and pupil input in lessons
 - emphasising consistency of expectations
 - sharing of best practice across the school
 - making sure that marking always indicates the way forward.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils' attainment is above average. Children enter the school with knowledge and skills slightly above those expected for their age and make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage so that all reach age related expectations with a good number exceeding them. This progress continues through Key Stages 1 and 2. Carefully chosen approaches, such as work on the language of mathematics and on letter formation in handwriting, and boy-friendly reading materials, advance pupils' skills in reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, effective support programmes quickly address any underachievement. They ensure an inclusive learning environment for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs as well as for the growing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Any remaining gaps between the performance of different groups are rapidly closing.

An engaging programme of enrichment weeks is helping to develop cross-curricular skills, for example, through linking literacy and history with new technologies. Open-ended topics and creative seminars allow the more able to extend their learning. Pupils are fluent, confident readers who reach above average standards by the end of Key Stage 1 and when they finish in Year 4. They can talk about the context of their chosen book, reasons for their choices and how characters or situations have been brought to life.

Learning in lessons is good. Pupils work well together and respond enthusiastically in independent work, especially when activities are closely timed or provide additional challenge. Pupils have good access to information and communication technology which they use confidently to enhance team and individual work. They are proud of the centrally located board which displays their 'Work of the week' and of the collages of St Edmund made to connect the school with its local history. Pupils enjoy school because there is always something going on. The wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs reinforces learning. Most pupils know their academic targets or where to find them. The very large majority of parents and carers feel that their children are making good progress and that the school helps them to support their children's learning. A similar proportion of children say they learn a lot in lessons.

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The vast majority feel that the school helps them to make progress.

Quality of teaching

The vast majority of parents and carers believe their children are well taught. Pupils agree in similar numbers. Inspectors found that these views are justified. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make good use of questioning to assess and develop pupils' skills. Teachers use a range of engaging resources and effectively link subjects to deliver the planned curriculum and relate it to pupils' own experiences. For example, in a Year 1 lesson on making an animated film during technology week, teaching was outstanding, and pupils were held spellbound when the teacher showed them the first cartoon ever made in the silent era. In Year 4 lesson to discuss and plan an invention, teaching was good, and the teacher carefully checked pupils' understanding so that initial enthusiasm resulted in positive outcomes. Use of support staff, including a native Polish speaker to give step-by-step guidance to pupils speaking English as an additional language, is a strength and indicative of the prompt integration of potentially vulnerable pupils into the classroom setting. Well-developed spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills are reinforced by shared residential visits with a partner school and links that teachers made on a recent visit to a Cambodian school.

Well-planned lessons ensure that all pupils, including the more able, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs or English as an additional language, make similar good progress. In the majority of lessons, pace, challenge and time are well used to ensure that expectations are high and that teaching leads to high quality outcomes. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long and pupils become restless when they are not able to get on with independent work quickly enough or opportunities for them to contribute are limited. The school is beginning to share best practice to make all teachers fully aware about how to advance learning.

The school has concentrated on developing teachers' assessment skills as part of its emphasis on thorough tracking and monitoring. Books are regularly marked, with some evidence of peer and self-assessment, but teachers' comments often focus on praising good efforts without indicating the way forward to the next level.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils have a keen sense of responsibility, such as when they help to tidy up at lunchtimes or ensure the safety of younger pupils in the playground and around the school. Expectations for behaviour are clear. Incidents are carefully monitored in order to address any inappropriate behaviour quickly. Individual class behaviour logs show successful management of minor incidents in class settings with a central log for more serious incidents and follow-up. Pupils are respectful of each other and of adults. The vast majority of parents and carers believe that behaviour is good at the school and the large majority feel that lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour. Pupils are very clear about the high expectations for behaviour as demonstrated in the large

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majority of lessons, but where lessons are less engaging, behaviour is occasionally less secure. The school has worked steadily to ensure that behaviour reaches high standards and to provide additional support wherever necessary. The large majority of parents and carers believe that the school deals effectively with any rare incidents of bullying. The very large majority of pupils agree and affirm that any incidents of bullying are quickly and securely sorted out. Positive behaviour is a focus of whole school assemblies.

Attendance is above average. All pupils are punctual to school and at lessons. Pupils move around the school with care for each other and the building. The vast majority feel safe. Their parents and carers agree in similar numbers. Pupils are happy to help each other resolve issues but are equally clear that there is always an adult who will provide any support needed. Pupils know how to stay safe, fit and healthy. The school helps parents and carers ensure these aspects; over-subscribed e-safety sessions for parents and carers were held on two consecutive evenings during the inspection. Effective transition arrangements into and out of the school are carefully planned to take individual needs into account. Very good arrangements meet the needs of pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, senior leaders, staff and governing body work effectively together to improve the school and deliver the vision exemplified by its mosaic – a place where everyone learns together but, like each tile, is valued for their individual gifts and talents. This approach ensures that equality of opportunity is at the heart of the school's work and that there is no discrimination of any kind. Staff work well as a team and are clear about their accountability for pupils' progress. Half-termly key stage meetings led by middle managers are an example of thorough monitoring and evaluation procedures. Middle managers also review the work of the teams they lead. Strong professional development ensures that staff deliver highly effective support programmes so any gaps in achievement are now minimal. The governing body is well organised. Visits to the school and regular contact with parents and carers ensure its members have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the challenges it still faces. The school believes that the growing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language brings a rich cultural mix into the school. Their families are represented on the governing body by a native Polish speaking governor. The headteacher is also executive headteacher of a neighbouring primary school; this partnership, along with a range of other strong links to the local community, has helped to enhance learning through shared initiatives. The school has good capacity to improve because its continuous improvement is not dependent on one or two leaders, self-evaluation is accurate and progress rates are rising.

Safeguarding is effective and meets all current requirements with thorough, regularly refreshed training in safety and safer recruitment for the governing body and staff. The broad, balanced curriculum is well planned; cross-curricular provision through events like enrichment weeks is a growing strength of the school and serves to engage learners with the subjects on offer. Provision is enhanced by a variety of

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visits and visitors. The careful emphasis on, and development of, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is a strength of the school.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



23 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Edmund's Catholic Primary School, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 1QG

Thank you for welcoming us to your school during our recent visit and for the help you gave us by talking to us and completing questionnaires.

St. Edmund's Catholic Primary School is a good school. Here are some of the things that your school does well.

- You are making good progress because the school works hard to make sure you have good skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You do exciting work during your enrichment weeks.
- You value the opportunity to look after each other during lunchtime and breaks.

The headteacher, staff and governing body want to make your school even better. To help them, we have asked them to do the following things:

- to make sure that all teaching is good or better by getting teachers to share what they do best
- to check that marking always lets you know how to improve your work
- to provide plenty of opportunities for you to contribute as much in lessons as your teachers do
- to have high expectations of how well you should be doing in all lessons.

The inspectors believe that your pride in your school and care for each other can help the school to improve. You can help by letting your teachers know whenever you have a question or have finished an activity so that your work moves forward quickly.

Yours sincerely

Michael Sutherland-Harper
Lead inspector

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