

St Edward's Catholic Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110475
Local Authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	356753
Inspection dates	29–30 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Arnalena (Nina) Bee

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michael Lowry
Headteacher	Anna Majcher
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2008
School address	Hazell Avenue Aylesbury Buckinghamshire HP21 7JF
Telephone number	01296 424544
Fax number	01296 381509
Email address	office@stedwards.bucks.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
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M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 parts of lessons and observed eight teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff and pupils. The work of the school was observed and the inspectors looked at school documentation, including evidence from the school's self-evaluation process and external monitoring. Fifty-three parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed along with 13 from staff and 100 from pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress made by different groups of pupils as they move through the school.
- The provision for English and mathematics, to see why pupils appear to make better progress in English than in mathematics.
- How effectively leaders and managers track and ensure that pupils' progress is good, especially in mathematics and for pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Information about the school

St Edward's is a two-form entry junior school. Three quarters of the pupils come from White British families or other White backgrounds. The remainder come from a number of minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average, as is the percentage who are at the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Edward's provides a good education for its pupils. The quality of care, guidance and support that is provided is outstanding. Pupils are very well known by staff and those with specific difficulties are very well catered for, particularly pupils with medical needs. Procedures for monitoring attendance are exceptionally thorough and as a result attendance is high. Pupils were keen to say how much they enjoy all aspects of school life. They have excellent opportunities to reflect on their lives and the lives of others and, as they do this, develop their understanding of the life and work of Jesus. Behaviour is outstanding. The school is a cohesive community where pupils from all walks of life and a range of different ethnic groups get on harmoniously with each other. By the time they leave in Year 6, they have developed excellent personal and social skills and good academic skills to help them in their next school.

Attainment is above average overall. Standards are higher in reading and writing than in mathematics and have been since the previous inspection. Although progress is good in reading and writing, in mathematics it is more often satisfactory. Teaching is good overall. Interactive whiteboards are used expertly to develop learning, and teaching assistants contribute effectively to the learning in classrooms. Progress is not so rapid in some numeracy lessons because teachers do not always match activities accurately to the wide range of abilities within each class. At times, teachers move on too quickly and miss checking that all pupils understand what is being taught. Mathematical vocabulary is not always effectively reinforced for all groups of pupils. Pupils who speak English as an additional language have not always made the progress they should in the past. Staff have started to assess their levels of language acquisition, but this information is not yet informing teachers' planning and the activities they devise as successfully as it could. The monitoring of this practice is in the early stages of development.

The headteacher, supported well by the deputy headteacher, has established a shared vision, centred on the belief that all pupils deserve a good education, become good citizens and so are well prepared for their next school. Self-evaluation is generally accurate and so enables staff and governors to have a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas for further development. Pupils' progress is regularly tracked and suitable intervention strategies are put in place if staff feel pupils need an extra boost. Governors are effectively involved in the work of the school, especially with the safeguarding of pupils, which is excellent. The way the school engages with parents and carers is also excellent and almost all parents and carers are appreciative of all that is done for their children. Since the previous inspection, attendance and the curriculum have improved and effective teaching and learning and excellent care, guidance and support have been maintained. These successes show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils' progress in mathematics matches the good progress they make in English by:
 - providing appropriate activities, tailored to meet the changing needs of individuals and groups
 - ensuring that, in lessons, adults regularly check that understanding is secure so that all pupils achieve well
 - providing a range of activities that effectively reinforce mathematical vocabulary for all groups of pupils.
- Improve the progress for pupils who speak English as an additional language by:
 - ensuring that their levels of English language acquisition are correctly identified and checked and their progress regularly monitored
 - ensuring that the instructions pupils are given before starting activities have been fully understood
 - developing banks of subject-specific words to enable pupils to improve their understanding in every area of the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and much enjoyment is evident in all classes. Pupils achieve well because the large majority of teaching and learning is effective. Good learning was seen in a literacy lesson in Year 5. The lesson ran at a swift pace and lively teaching and good quality planning ensured that all abilities were involved as pupils identified information about the characters they were reading about. The teacher used words such as 'inference' and 'deduction' effectively to reinforce and extend learning. In numeracy lessons, learning is not always as effective because assessment is not consistently used well to accurately plan activities for different ability groups. This occasionally affects the learning of higher attaining and lower attaining pupils. In a number of subject areas, when pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language do not receive additional support, they get confused and their learning is not as rapid as that of the other pupils. When effectively supported by the teaching assistants, these pupils learn well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because staff are generally well aware of their difficulties and plan activities accordingly. ♦

Pupils speak very knowledgeably about the importance of keeping themselves safe. They are adamant that their school is a safe and secure place to be and that if they have a problem any adult will sort it out for them. They show a good awareness of why it is important to eat healthily and take exercise regularly. Pupils spoke about enjoying physical education lessons and the extra sporting activities that take place after school. Assemblies and meditation sessions give pupils excellent opportunities to focus on developing their spiritual and moral awareness. Music is also well promoted as pupils sing tunefully, and with much enjoyment, songs they have learnt. Cultural development is good, but pupils' knowledge of different religions is not as strong as other areas. Pupils are proud of their school and take the many jobs they do, such as becoming members of the school council

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or peer mediators, very seriously. Older pupils spoke very sensitively about why they raise funds for people who are not as fortunate as they are.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teachers develop good relationships with their pupils and know them well. As a result, each class is full of very positive learners. Resources, including interactive whiteboards and computers, are used effectively to promote learning. Attractive and informative displays, in all classrooms, are used extremely well to reinforce and extend learning. Teaching assistants support individuals and small groups effectively and contribute well to learning. In most instances, teachers use information collected on individuals effectively to plan activities that are accurately matched to pupils' needs. However, at times, particularly in numeracy lessons, this is not so well done. In addition, although numeracy lessons may run at a fast pace, teachers do not always check learning regularly enough. The marking of pupils' work is good and consistent procedures have been established throughout the school. Marking is consistently informing pupils what they need to do to improve and pupils respond positively to this.

The thematic curriculum is well planned and delivered. The provision for literacy and information and communication technology is strong. Provision for mathematics is satisfactory and under review. A good selection of out-of-school activities is offered. These include a wide range of clubs such as sports, film-making, gardening, music and drama. In

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addition, pupils benefit from exciting educational visits, including a residential visit in Year 5, which includes indoor and outdoor activities as well as a high focus on spirituality. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective and enables them to make good progress. Currently, the provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language is not quite as well established but has improved over the last year. Procedures for assessing these pupils' progress are developing and the provision is satisfactory overall.

Staff provide a welcoming environment which is conducive for pupils to develop excellent personal and social skills and learn well. The development of personal and social skills has a strong focus in all the pupils do. Excellent attention is given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. Pupils are well supported when they enter and leave the school because of secure procedures for transition. Pupils whose circumstances make them more vulnerable are catered for extremely well to enable them to develop in all areas. Detailed notes are kept and very good liaison takes place with external agencies when necessary. The breakfast club and after-school club have recently been introduced. They are well attended and offer good quality provision for pupils at the start and end of each day. Pupils say they thoroughly enjoy these experiences.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's aim 'to ensure that we do our best to enable our children to do their best' is reflected in the ambition and drive for further improvement demonstrated by senior leaders, particularly the headteacher, who has high aspirations and provides very strong leadership. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress are thorough and teachers are held accountable for pupils' progress. Leaders and managers meet regularly with senior staff to ensure that pupils are on course to meet their targets. As a result, action is taken promptly to address early signs of underachievement.

The way in which the school promotes community cohesion is good. A detailed audit has taken place which shows a clear analysis of its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context and senior leaders are beginning to evaluate the impact of the school's work. Pupils from different backgrounds get on extremely well with each other. The school has established links nationally, for example through pen pal links with another school. Links with the wider world are made through fund raising for different charities and further plans are in place to extend these. ♦

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Pupils' personal needs are carefully identified so that all have equal opportunities for success in school. There is evidence to show that the gap between the achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language and other groups is narrowing as a result of the school's actions. The governing body provides good quality support. It is particularly effective in ensuring that safeguarding procedures are the very best. The school's focus on all areas of safety is excellent. Health and safety procedures are taken very seriously by staff and governors. At the time of the inspection all aspects of safeguarding were secure. Governors successfully ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Views of parents and carers

All the parents and carers who returned questionnaires feel that the school keeps their children safe. Almost all say that they are well informed about their children's progress and that teaching is good. Many parents and carers took the trouble to write positive comments about the work of the school, especially about how much their children enjoy school, how the physical education curriculum has improved and how much they appreciate the numerous additional sporting activities on offer. Overall, almost all are happy with their children's experience at St Edward's.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

The inspection team received 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 231 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	47	25	47	3	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	29	55	24	45	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	40	31	58	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	47	23	43	4	8	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	25	47	25	47	1	2	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	36	30	57	3	6	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	40	32	60	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	18	34	29	55	3	6	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	40	29	55	3	6	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	36	28	53	4	8	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	36	28	53	4	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	16	30	33	62	2	4	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	47	26	49	1	2	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



30 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Edward's Catholic Junior School, Aylesbury HP21 7JF

Thank you for the welcome we received and the help you gave us during our recent visit. We enjoyed talking to you and we all noticed your excellent behaviour. We especially enjoyed your assemblies where you are given very good opportunities to think about others and develop a secure understanding of the life of Jesus. Yours is a good school and it is well led and managed. The staff know you really well and so the care, guidance and support you receive is outstanding. Teaching is good and helps you to learn well. You show a good awareness of the importance of eating healthily and keeping fit. There is a wide range of sporting activities after school and you told us how much you enjoy these. We know you feel very safe at school because you told us so. You have also learnt some excellent information about how to keep yourselves safe as you get older. By the time you leave, in Year 6, you are well prepared academically and develop excellent personal and social skills because of the many extra responsibilities you are given in school. We were impressed to see so many of you doing jobs which help others, the environment and the community as a whole.

We have asked the school to do two things to improve the education you receive.

- Help you to make faster progress in mathematics by checking that you all understand what you are doing throughout every lesson and making sure you develop a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary.
- Ensure that those of you who are learning to speak English as an additional language are given extra support and resources to make sure you fully understand what you are expected to learn in every lesson and that teachers make regular checks on your progress in learning English.

You can all help by continuing to work hard in all lessons.

Yours sincerely

Nina Bee

Lead inspector

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