

# St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119592
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379847
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 May 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Nigel Cromey-Hawke

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	103
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Frances Hopkins
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Ashley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Windrows New Church Farm Skelmersdale WN8 8NP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01695 724798
<b>Fax number</b>	01695 724798
<b>Email address</b>	bursar@st-edmunds.lancs.sch.uk

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## Introduction

Inspection team

Nigel Cromey-Hawke

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons taught by five teachers, including joint observations with the headteacher. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, pupils' work, safeguarding arrangements, self-evaluation records, relevant policies and performance data. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They also scrutinised questionnaires from 43 parents and carers, 11 staff and 73 pupils.

## Information about the school

This is a much smaller than average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage, with a very few who speak English as an additional language. In the recent past there has been a sizeable group of Irish Traveller pupils but this has shrunk to only two pupils this year. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-above average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above that usually found. Previously, more pupils than usual joined the school at other than normal times. However, currently the proportion is broadly average. The school meets the current floor standards that are minimum standards expected by the government. The school operates its own breakfast club. The school has Healthy School status and the Activemark award. The school has undergone significant staffing changes in the last two years.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is a very welcoming and inclusive school, where pupils are highly valued as individuals. St Edmund's is not yet outstanding because some teaching and some aspects of the curriculum and leadership and management are satisfactory.
- Achievement is good. From low starting points on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage progress is good, with attainment by the end of Year 6 broadly average. Attainment in writing in some classes is below average, which limits some pupils' ability to communicate their thoughts and ideas. The progress of disabled pupils and those supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is good. The progress of Irish Traveller pupils is often outstanding.
- Teaching is good overall, with some that is outstanding. The best teaching is characterised by good pace and challenge and good planning that produces interesting lesson activities. Assessment is used well to help pupils improve their work. Some teaching is less effective. In these lessons, there is insufficient pace to maintain pupils' full interest and activities are not always closely matched to learners' needs, especially the more able. The curriculum is rich in experiences for pupils but their understanding of cultures other than their own and their contact with them is underdeveloped.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils are good. Almost all pupils say they feel very safe and enjoy their time in school. Bullying incidents are extremely rare and very well dealt with. Attendance is average and improving rapidly.
- Leadership and management are good. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and manages performance effectively, especially in relation to the quality of its teaching. Attainment in reading has risen, attendance has improved since the previous inspection and some weaker areas of performance, such as gaps in boys' achievement, have been closed. Some governor training in school improvement has yet to take place.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment further by improving the small amount of satisfactory teaching to at least good by;
  - further developing pupils' writing skills, especially in lower Key Stage 2, so that they can better communicate their thoughts and ideas
  - bring more pace to satisfactory lessons so that pupils' interest is maintained throughout the lesson
  - provide more challenge in lessons through a better match of activities to pupils' needs and interests, especially for the more able.
- Ensure that the curriculum provides more opportunities for extending pupils' understanding of the diversity of the wider world and their contact with it.
- Extend the training of some governors so that, as a group, they are better able to support the schools' drive for improvement.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Almost all parents and carers consider their child is making good progress at the school and inspection evidence confirms their view. This is due to the typically good and sometimes outstanding teaching and learning that was observed during the inspection. Children enter the joint Nursery/Reception class with basic skills that are generally low in comparison to others of their age, although this varies considerably because of the small numbers of children. Well-planned, interesting activities and effective teaching mean that children make good progress. The setting is a bright and vibrant learning environment and children particularly enjoy the well-resourced outdoor areas the school provides.

This good progress continues throughout the rest of the school, resulting in improved outcomes over the last two years. Attainment by the time pupils leave in Year 6 is broadly average. The school focuses very strongly on developing pupils' reading skills. This is seen in regular sessions to teach pupils how to sound out words and in the extensive support provided by teaching assistants, visiting governors, parents and older pupils for younger ones in listening to them read. As a result, while language skills are generally low on entry to the school, attainment in reading is currently average by the end of Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Pupils who read for the inspector spoke with pleasure about books they had read and used a good range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar words with confidence. The school knows that pupils' skills in writing are weaker with the result that some pupils find it difficult to communicate their thoughts and ideas confidently. This is especially the case in lower Key Stage 2 where recent disruptions in staffing slowed progress. However, more settled staffing and targeted support programmes are bringing about secure improvement. Differences in the performance of boys compared to girls have been very successfully tackled by a revision of the curriculum and targeted support through boy-friendly resources and activities. School data confirmed by inspection findings show that the vast majority of pupils are making better progress throughout

the school than similar pupils nationally given their starting points. Disabled pupils and those supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress, because of the high levels of additional support they receive. Attainment of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average and shows that they also make very good progress. The small number of Traveller pupils currently in school are achieving outstandingly well.

### **Quality of teaching**

A very high percentage of parents and carers and pupils are of the view that teaching is good. The inspection evidence supports these views, with some teaching being outstanding but also a small amount being satisfactory. Teamwork between teachers and support staff is strong. It has a positive impact upon the learning of pupils who are disabled and those supported by school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs. Staff share planning effectively so that the needs of these pupils are appropriately met. Where teaching is most effective, teaching is lively and challenging. Good planning ensures that activities are varied and interesting with the result that pupils concentrate well and enjoy learning. Good use is made of assessment to show pupils what they need to do to improve their work. For example, in one outstanding English lesson on persuasive writing the teacher devised his lesson instructions as an advertisement that was then delivered in the form of a highly amusing television presentation. This instantly gained pupils' interest and, together with clear guidelines on how to produce a good piece of work, resulted in enjoyable, high-quality independent writing. In another outstanding lesson, the teacher used lines of pupils to interview a chosen pupil who acted as a character within the poem being studied to help pupils understand the emotions involved. 'Nonsense' words within the poem were also used to great effect to stretch pupils' abilities to read difficult words by breaking them down into their individual sounds.

Where teaching is satisfactory, it lacks some pace and variety because planning is less detailed and assessment data on pupils' ability are not used as effectively to match activities to pupils' needs. This is especially the case for more-able pupils. As a result, some pupils lose interest and progress in these lessons is no better than satisfactory. Teaching and the planned curriculum support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Teaching ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

The school is a calm, well ordered and very welcoming community. Parents, carers and pupils are very confident that pupils are safe, very well looked after and the inspection evidence confirms these views. A good range of planned curriculum activities raises pupils' awareness of how to deal with potentially unsafe situations, for example near roads and railways and when using information and communication technology to support their learning and at home. A small minority of pupils expressed some concern in their questionnaires that behaviour is neither good nor well managed in some lessons. However, despite very occasional instances of disruption where teaching is satisfactory, inspection evidence and school records how

that, over time, behaviour is good. There have been no exclusions since the previous inspection. Behaviour in the best lessons and around the school is often exemplary. Older pupils act confidently as trained helpers in the playground and help ensure that different forms of bullying are very rare. When encountered, any instances of bullying of any sort are dealt with very effectively. Attendance is average. It has improved rapidly since the previous inspection because of effective steps taken by the school and because of pupils' growing enjoyment of school. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced significantly because of the highly effective support provided by the learning mentor. Many pupils attend the breakfast club which gets them off to a positive start to the school day. Many pupils enjoy taking part in the Wake and Shake activity sessions run daily. Many are also involved in the good range of after-school activities provided by the school, including residential experiences, music and a very wide range of sporting opportunities. These contribute significantly to their adoption of healthy lifestyles and reflect the school's awards in these areas.

### **Leadership and management**

Good leadership and management by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher are driving the school forward. Staffing has been stabilised after a period of some turbulence and staff morale is high. The headteacher is ably supported by the governing body that regularly visits the school and provides support through classroom visits, help with reading and attendance at school events. Governors challenge the school's work effectively but they are aware that some governors still require the necessary training to help them fully support the school's drive for improvement. Despite this, school leaders have maintained a clear and effective focus on raising attainment, improving pupils' progress, and on pupils' welfare. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well through a comprehensive monitoring programme. It has good quality plans for further development. Subject leaders keep a close eye on individual pupils' progress. Procedures for target-setting and the assessment of pupils' progress have been reviewed and are now more robust and effective in supporting both teachers and pupils in knowing the progress that is being made. Swift action is taken to meet the needs of any pupils or groups identified as falling behind, as shown by gaps being rapidly closed for boys and in writing. Professional development for staff is closely aligned to school priorities and has been a key factor in securing improvements in teaching and learning. As such, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is good.

The rich curriculum is well structured. Spanish and technology are both taught through a good partnership agreement with the local high school. The curriculum promotes pupils' behaviour and spiritual, moral and social development extremely well, but the school is aware that much of its previously extensive work in linking with other countries has lapsed due to recent staffing changes. This means that, despite some curriculum coverage, there are limited opportunities for pupils to gain an understanding or experience of cultures other than their own. The school engages very well with parents and carers, involving them extensively in school life and providing a comprehensive programme of family learning, helped by its strong links with the local parish and nearby children's centre. The promotion of equal opportunities is effective, with the needs of most groups of learners well met.

Instances of discrimination are rare and, if encountered, tackled robustly.  
Safeguarding requirements are fully met.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	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 to 31 December 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](http://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.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
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.**



4 May 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Edmund's Catholic Primary School, Skelmersdale, WN8 8NP**

Thank you for the warm reception you gave me when I inspected your school recently and for sharing your views with me about it. You were very friendly, polite and enthusiastic about what you do.

St Edmund's is a good school. You get a good start to your learning in the Nursery and Reception class and make good progress there. This continues throughout the school. By the time you leave the school in Year 6 the attainment of most of you is broadly average. Those of you who are disabled or who are supported at school action plus or have special educational needs also make good progress, due to the additional support you receive. Teaching across the school is good, with some that is outstanding but also some that is satisfactory. The range of subjects that you study is good. The school looks after you well, your behaviour is good and your attendance is improving. Well done! Senior staff are leading the school well and bringing about further improvements.

To make your school better, I have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to:

- make sure that all your lessons are good by making them more challenging and improving your writing skills
- provide more opportunities for you to link with other cultures and countries so that you have a better understanding of how other people live
- extend the training of some members of the governing body so that they are better able to support the school.

You can help by telling your teachers how best you learn and if you have any problems. I wish you the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nigel Cromey-Hawke  
Lead inspector

