

St Edward's Roman Catholic/Church of England VA School

Dale Valley Road, Oakdale, Poole, Dorset, BH15 3HY

Inspection dates 30 April – 1 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Students achieve well at school because improvements in teaching have led to a sharp upturn in progress. Strong support for those who need help makes sure that progress is consistent for all groups of students.
- Teaching is good overall. Teachers use their strong subject knowledge to promote effective learning, asking relevant questions and keeping up a brisk pace. A positive learning atmosphere is typical as students strive to meet the teachers' expectations.
- The sixth form is good. It is improving because the quality of teaching is rising, leading to higher attainment and good achievement.
- Behaviour is good. Students are mature and get along well with their teachers and one another, often working collaboratively. The school is calm and orderly. Bullying of all types is unusual and students say that staff deal with any incidents very well.
- The strengthened leadership and management team provides a clear sense of direction and members work well together. With subject leaders, they regularly check up on staff and students, acting swiftly to address concerns.
- The governing body checks most aspects of the school thoroughly and has an understanding that helps it to provide a suitable level of challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Some teaching offers too few opportunities for students to learn independently and does not challenge them fully. Marking is inconsistent, so guidance to students on how to raise their standards varies in quality.
- Leaders, managers and members of the governing body do not check up on the allocation of additional government funding or the progress of the students who are eligible for this money in enough depth.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 34 lessons taught by 32 teachers and undertook nine joint observations with senior staff.
- Inspectors held discussions with students, teachers, the headteacher and senior managers, representatives of the governing body and a local authority officer.
- Inspectors examined numerous school documents including policies, assessment information, planning documents and records of all kinds.
- The views of 85 parents and carers were analysed through the Parent View website.

Inspection team

John Carnaghan, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Patricia Goodhead	Additional Inspector
Colin Money	Additional Inspector
Peter Clifton	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Edward's Roman Catholic/Church of England VA School is an average-sized secondary school. Almost all pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for looked-after children, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- A small group of students use alternative provision in a local school and college.
- No students are entered early for GCSE examinations.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school currently has an extensive building programme as part of its expansion plans; Year 7 students will be admitted for the first time in September 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so a higher proportion is outstanding by:
 - planning and delivering lessons that offer the correct degree of challenge and support to all groups of students
 - providing more opportunities for students to think and work independently by reducing the time that teachers talk and encouraging students to learn for themselves
 - making sure all marking of students' work offers them helpful advice on the quality of their work and precise guidance on what needs to be done to improve.
- Plan for and analyse the impact of pupil premium spending with greater rigour, to establish whether it provides good value for money.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Students' progress is rapidly improving because teaching is increasingly effective and lessons are more strongly focused on promoting learning. This is having a positive effect on attainment across the school, which is also rising.
- Students' attainment at the end of Year 11 is above average in GCSE subjects and close to average when other subjects are taken into account. This pattern is indicative of good achievement overall. Students' achievement is above average in English and mathematics, including that of the most able.
- Recent developments to develop and increase the quality of additional help offered to students have been effective in evening out previous variations in progress between different groups. Skilled, often specialist, teaching assistants provide regular, effective support to individuals. In consequence, the achievement of students who are disabled and those with special educational needs is similar and sometimes better than that of their peers.
- Learning and support programmes that are closely tailored to individual students' needs are proving most effective, for example Year 11 students' progress is benefiting from the school's well-organised mentoring programme.
- The attention to detail the school provides in helping all groups of students ensures that it offers equality of opportunity for all and that no student is the subject of discrimination.
- The small group of students receiving alternative provision benefit from doing work that is carefully selected to meet their needs and regularly checked on. In consequence, their academic and personal development is similar to their peers.
- The progress of students in receipt of the pupil premium is similar to that of the others in the school. Their attainment, as measured in national assessments, is below that of other students in the school but the additional support they receive means that the gap, including at GCSE in English and mathematics, is slowly closing. Improvement is not as rapid as it should be because this expenditure does not always go where it is most needed.
- Achievement in the sixth form is good. The recent stronger focus on developing teachers' skills has started to quickly improve progress and raise attainment. Above average results at AS level in 2012 are feeding through to higher attainment in Year 13.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is typically good. It is not better because there are some inconsistencies and not enough lessons promote outstanding learning. Students in the sixth form rightly feel that their teaching is good, saying that staff 'go above and beyond' what is expected to support their learning.
- When provided with opportunities for discussion in small groups or pairs, including during practical work, students enthusiastically explore their different ideas. This promotes good learning. Teachers foster good relationships; they manage students well and this builds confidence and self-esteem.
- Students' understanding is usually well developed because teachers ask the right questions. Students are confident that their views and ideas are valued. However, there are times in lessons when too few students volunteer to answer questions. When this happens, teachers do not always think of ways to help them participate more actively.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, sometimes helping students develop their basic literacy and numeracy skills. There are examples in mathematics where these skills are used, for example in changing the subject of an equation, and this helps with students' work in science. However, occasionally students who are disabled or have special educational needs do not have

enough support to help them understand technical vocabulary.

- Leaders have improved the way work is marked and assessed to promote better learning. This includes the use of self-assessment sheets by the students and information to help them understand different National Curriculum levels. Nevertheless, while there is some effective marking, this is inconsistent. Some books are poorly marked so students do not understand the quality of their work or how to improve it.
- Planning generally meets the range of students' needs. Teachers have good information about students' attainment and regularly check progress in lessons. However, in some lessons, opportunities are missed to challenge effectively all the different groups within classes and students say they sometimes find work too easy or difficult.
- Lessons typically move at a brisk pace and build ideas and understanding systematically. Teachers explain ideas well and this promotes good learning.
- In some lessons teachers talk to the whole class for too long, which sometimes stifles students' learning and independence. For example, in a mathematics lesson too many sums were required to be completed before students had the opportunity to apply their understanding to solve more challenging problems.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Students enjoy school life and report they feel safe in this caring environment. Students, staff and parents and carers have very few concerns about behaviour. They are right to be confident because staff manage behaviour very well. Behaviour and safety at the off-site provision are also good.
- There is a calmness about the school, both in lessons and around the site at lesson changeover times or during break and lunchtime. Almost all students behave with maturity and get along with one another very well. Where teaching is less interesting, students sometimes become talkative and lose concentration. However, when reminded, they soon refocus on their tasks.
- The respect students show to one another and to staff contributes to a good environment for learning that is typical of almost all lessons. Students arrive punctually and ready to take part. They are good listeners and show an appetite for learning, responding enthusiastically to teachers' requests and challenges.
- The school has effective strategies to deal with the few students who exhibit disruptive behaviour. Exclusions have steadily fallen over the last three years and are below the national average; there were no permanent exclusions last year.
- Students are well briefed about bullying in its various forms, including through texting on mobile phones. They recognise that bullying can occasionally start up but are fully confident that staff quickly move in to nip any such incidents in the bud.
- The well-organised personal, social and health education programme provides valuable information to students about how to stay safe in their everyday lives, so they are well aware of how to avoid risks whether it is on the internet or on the busy local roads.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers have had to face the challenge of planning for an additional year group joining the school in September 2013, including having to oversee an extensive building programme. However, despite these difficulties, the school identified areas where improvement was required and the development plan has been fully implemented, quickly boosting students' achievement. The school continues to benefit from good support from the local authority.
 - Relatively recent changes to senior and middle management have improved opportunities for students by ensuring better teaching and increased levels of support for those falling behind. This has quickly had a positive impact on students' achievement. The school demonstrates the
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capacity for continuing improvement.

- Regular checks on teaching throughout the school have raised expectations and are closely linked to relevant training opportunities for staff. The school's records of the quality of teaching closely match the quality observed during the inspection.
 - The school has good systems to check on attainment and progress. It feeds this information into a readily accessible tracking system so that all staff are aware of students' progress. This has two important benefits: first, records enable teachers to identify variations in students' progress and take appropriate action such as providing one-to-one help; second, it enables leaders and managers to hold staff closely to account for students' achievement. This linking of students' progress data to teachers' pay progression is also driving up standards.
 - The mixture of subjects offered provides good balance and largely meets students' needs. Increased vocational courses and alternative provision help students who need to balance academic study with more practical learning. For example, students can take the employability award and BTEC courses in science and physical education. The school plans systematically to promote literacy and numeracy across all subjects and this is starting to be seen in lessons.
 - Staff provide very helpful advice to students as they transfer into and out of Key Stage 4. There is great flexibility in the options they choose at the end of Year 9, so most can study the subjects they want. External and internal guidance helps students understand what is available locally post-16 and make informed choices about their courses. This promotes a very high rate of completion of sixth form courses, which was almost 100% in 2011/12.
 - Students' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is evident in many areas of the school, particularly in the calm, considerate and positive ethos. There are good opportunities for students to reflect on their beliefs and those of others, particularly in assemblies. However, there is some inconsistency in the way each of the four areas is developed, because there is no systematic planning to promote them across all subjects.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are well informed about the school's performance because they have a good grasp of students' achievement data, particularly in examinations, and how it compares nationally. Close links to subjects and other aspects keep governors up to date with school life and the quality of teaching; they understand the connection between teachers' performance and their pay progression and how the school rewards good teachers and tackles underperformance. Members of the governing body use their understanding to both challenge and support the school leadership as required and have taken a rigorous approach to most aspects of the school budget. Their competencies are regularly upgraded through undertaking training. Awareness of students' safety is strong and governors' contributions ensure that safeguarding requirements are fully met. Governors are unclear whether pupil premium resources are allocated appropriately and if this expenditure is having positive benefits for the identified students. The school also acknowledges that while students eligible for the pupil premium are identified on its checking systems, there has been too little analysis of how well this group is doing, so leaders and managers are unsure if the allocation of resources to this group provides good value for money.
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What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113893
Local authority	Poole
Inspection number	412834

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	12–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	906
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Morris
Headteacher	Pola Bevan
Date of previous school inspection	27–28 May 2010
Telephone number	01202 740950
Fax number	01202 733702
Email address	admin@st-edwards.poole.sch.uk

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