

St Edward's Catholic Primary School

Eastleigh Road, Kettering, NN15 6PT

Inspection dates 10–11 July 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.

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection. The great majority of pupils leave school with at least average, and increasingly above average, levels of attainment.
- All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good or better progress.
- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Teachers and support staff work very well together.
- Parents are highly positive about their children's experiences of the school.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well.
- Pupils behave very well, both in lessons and around the school. They are keen and eager to learn and respond enthusiastically to questioning. Pupils feel very safe and well cared for.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of clubs and learning activities, for example a range of musical instrument lessons and sports clubs.
- The headteacher, ably supported by her middle leadership team and governors has been effective in leading sustained school improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The leadership checks the quality of teaching and learning effectively. All staff share the vision for improvement and high expectations of what pupils can achieve.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, teachers do not give more-able pupils challenging enough work in lessons and so slows their progress.
- Teachers do not always make sure that pupils are aware of their targets and how to achieve them.
- Teachers do not always check pupils' progress thoroughly in lessons.
- Teachers do not always make sure pupils know what skills and knowledge they need to be successful in their learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed all teachers at least once. A total of 14 lessons, or part lessons, were observed, which included six joint observations carried out with the headteacher.
- The inspectors heard individual pupils read and observed lessons on the teaching of reading and letters and the sounds they make (phonics).
- Discussions were held with the senior leadership team, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, groups of pupils, the special educational needs coordinator and other staff. The lead inspector also had a conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation including performance data, school records, policies and improvement plans.
- The inspection team took account of 32 parental responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the 49 responses to a recent school questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ronald Hall, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sue Calvert

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported through the pupil premium is below average. This extra government money is provided to the school to help certain groups of pupils. In this school it currently applies only to pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average, but the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average and increasing, as is the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the amount of outstanding teaching by making sure that:
 - teachers share with pupils the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in their learning
 - pupils are fully aware of their targets and how to achieve them.
- Raise achievement by making sure that:
 - teachers consistently supply work which challenges the more-able pupils
 - teachers consistently use the information they gain on pupils' progress in lessons to modify their learning.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school with levels of skill, particularly in communication and literacy, below those typically expected for their age. They leave school with average, and increasingly above average attainment. This is a result of consistent improvements both in teaching and the effectiveness of the leadership team checking pupils' progress since the previous inspection.
- Children in Reception and pupils in all age groups throughout the school make good progress. As school data show pupils in Year 6 are on track to leave with attainment levels above average in English and mathematics.
- Children in Reception make good progress in developing skills in English and mathematics. This is continued in Year 1, where school data on the most recent phonics check, which tested pupils' ability to blend and read difficult or unfamiliar words, show that pupils achieved scores in line with national expectations. This is a marked improvement on the results from 2012.
- The school has reversed historic underachievement in mathematics due to a concerted effort to improve this subject. In particular, those eligible for pupil premium funding make progress in both mathematics and English at a faster rate than similar pupils nationally and other pupils in the school. There are no gaps between their attainment and that of their peers.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have benefited from very well-targeted and systematic programmes of support. Although school data show these pupils are achieving at levels about two terms below their peers in school, they do make good progress from their low starting parts.
- Any gaps in attainment and progress between different groups of pupils are being closed effectively. In particular, the underachievement in mathematics which has been a feature of recent years has been reversed through a programme of extensive professional support for staff and extra resources. An example of this change in approach was seen during a Year 5 lesson on problem solving. The pupils were fully engaged in deciphering Chinese numbers and creating 'magic squares. Pupils at all levels stated they felt challenged and enjoyed learning mathematics. The school has also effectively tackled gaps in performance between boys and girls and between different year groups.
- The positive attitudes of all the adults, results in pupils making outstanding progress in their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils were highly challenged in their consideration of what people actually need and what they may want to live their lives. This was further enhanced by the addition of a related story and the pupils demonstrated excellent empathy to tease out the nature of the characters involved.
- Occasionally, more-able pupils do not achieve as well as they should in what are otherwise effective lessons. This happens when these pupils spend too long on quite ordinary tasks which do not stretch their learning, or they are not encouraged early enough in lessons to work away from the teacher's direct control. For example, inspectors saw an English lesson where pupils were taught about quotations, even though the more able pupils grasped the ideas quickly they were not moved on to more appropriate work until later in the lesson.

The quality of teaching is good

- Leaders and managers have been very effective in improving the quality of teaching, through a combination of rigorous and systematic checking of classroom practice and providing extensive and high quality professional support for staff.
- Strengths of the good teaching are the skilful questioning of pupils to further their understanding, the use of resources which are well targeted to specific needs and the positive way other adults are used to support learning. Teachers encourage pupils to express themselves at length in lessons, thereby developing their thinking and communication skills as well as their subject knowledge.
- Inspectors observed teachers and teaching assistants providing very effective support for pupils with particular learning needs, both in lessons and small groups elsewhere, for example during the effective teaching of letters and sounds to develop reading.
- Teaching in the Reception class is good and the other adults who support learning make a positive contribution to the children's progress. Interesting activities are well resourced and the outside area, which was a concern during the last inspection, has been completely remodelled and is an effective learning area.
- Teachers generally mark pupils' work effectively but this can be a little inconsistent in some classes. Teachers' comments in books do show pupils how to improve their work and move on.
- Where teaching is at its best, the pupils are fully aware of what skills and subject knowledge they are going to learn. However, this is not the case in all lessons and so pupils' progress slows as they are not sure what it is they are learning or why.
- Progress is also slowed in some lessons when teachers do not use the information they are gaining during a lesson in order to change and adapt the learning further, so that pupils can make faster progress. For example in a lesson seen on addition; pupils were taught how to add two digit numbers. However, even though it was clear that many could do this easily, the teacher failed to modify the lesson to take account of the progress the pupils had made and so they did not achieve as well as they might have done.
- Although pupils do know their targets they are often confused by them, as teachers rarely refer to them in lessons and so pupils do not know how they relate to their learning and/or how to achieve them.
- Both the results of Parent View and the school's own questionnaire show that parents have a positive view about teaching in the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour towards others is considerate. Many show mature attitudes, for instance when supporting the younger ones during lunch time who can be very demanding of their time.
- In lessons pupils show a clear readiness to learn. They develop good skills in listening to others, are responsive to teachers and other adults, and cooperate with each other willingly, for example as learning partners. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, such as acting as

mentors and break monitors. This was fully supported by comments from younger children who stated, 'The older children look after us they are really kind and teach us games on the playground.'

- Pupils feel behaviour is good at playtimes and lunchtimes. They understand that some pupils find it difficult to control their behaviour and are sympathetic to their needs. Pupils understand the different types of bullying behaviour, but say there is little bullying, and have confidence in staff to address any problems that occasionally arise. Exclusions are rare.
- In both the Parent View and school surveys, all parents and carers agreed that their children feel safe in school.
- Although pupils' behaviour is regularly good, when lessons are not as good as they might be a small minority of pupils drift 'off task' or may cause some minor disruption, which slows progress in lessons.
- The pupils' enjoyment of learning is clearly shown in the fact that attendance, which was below average has improved and in the current year is broadly average.

The leadership and management are good

- Senior leaders and managers maintain a focus on the checking of pupils' progress at an individual, year-group and whole-school basis as a priority. They all have high aspirations for the school and are effectively supported by the governing body in managing the direction of the school.
- Self-evaluation is accurate and based on robust monitoring systems. The senior leadership team uses this information effectively to plan future improvements. An example of this can be seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where monitoring has shown that children are increasingly entering the school with skills lower than age related expectations. The leadership team has effectively restructured and resourced the unit to help these children settle in quicker and have available targeted resources for their specific needs.
- Alongside the governing body, the senior leadership team has also made sure that when the substantive headteacher leaves the school at the end of this school year, there will be a smooth handover to the acting headteacher. To facilitate this the acting headteacher has undergone extensive training both in school and with the local authority to make sure that capacity to improve is not reduced.
- The safeguarding of pupils' welfare and the pastoral support for pupils, and increasingly of families whose circumstances make them vulnerable, are highly effective and meet requirements.
- Pupils' interest in their learning is well promoted across the full range of subjects. For example, in an assembly, pupils demonstrated a sense of community as they supported the Year 6 pupils in preparation for their leaving assembly.
- As a result of effective action taken by leaders, strategies to teach phonics have been greatly improved. As a result, attainment at the end of Reception is now broadly average because leaders have raised standards.

■ From joint observations and the scrutiny of the monitoring and evaluation of teaching it is clear that the leadership and management of teaching are effective in improving teaching across the school. The monitoring of teaching as well as the performance of the pupils is used effectively by the senior leadership team to support them in monitoring the performance of teachers and allows them to closely link this performance to future pay increases and training.

■ The local authority provides light-touch support for this good school.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– Governors have high aspirations for the school and its improvement. They receive evaluative reports from the headteacher and have a clear understanding of standards of attainment across the school. They are clear about how the pupil premium is used to best effect and what the impact of the spending has been. They check that pupils eligible for this support achieve as well as other pupils. They know how the achievement and progress of pupils in the school compare with other schools. Governors make sure that the performance management of the headteacher and all other staff is carried out appropriately and monitor teachers' performance in relation to pay rises. They know about the quality of teaching and what the school is doing to tackle any underperformance. They make sure that statutory requirements are met and that safeguarding arrangements are implemented consistently.

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	122047
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	411945

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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anna Kilsby
Headteacher	Nicola Vaughan
Date of previous school inspection	14 July 2010
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