

St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

Radley Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 3PP

Inspection dates 26–27 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Some pupils have not made fast enough progress in mathematics because the work they are given is not always hard enough.
- Attainment at the end of the Reception Year has fallen for the last three years running because some children do not make enough progress.
- Boys' attainment in writing remains below their attainment in reading and mathematics. Many have weak spelling, grammar and punctuation skills, and some do not take enough care with their handwriting and presentation.
- Some pupils do not always follow their teachers' advice to make sure that their next piece of writing is better than their last.
- Teachers do not use assessment data to plan tasks and activities that would help pupils to develop thinking skills in mathematics, and help them to solve problems.
- Systems to monitor pupils' progress are not rigorous enough. Consequently leaders and governors have not identified gaps in pupils' learning and tackled any slowdown in progress quickly enough until this year.
- A significant number of pupils, mostly boys, do not have the positive attitudes that they need to support their learning in Year 1.
- The school has too little information on which to base decisions about teachers' performance.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils make good progress in reading because teaching in this subject is good.
- The most able pupils make good progress to reach the higher levels of which they are capable.
- Pupils say that they feel safe, and that the very rare instances of bullying are tackled effectively.
- A broad range of topics, clubs and cultural activities make a strong contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are polite and treat adults and each other with respect.
- Attendance has been consistently above average since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 21 lessons taught by 12 teachers. In addition, they made a number of short visits to lessons.
- The inspectors looked at past and current information about pupils' progress and pupils' work in books and on display. They also heard some pupils read.
- The inspectors also looked at documents relating to behaviour and safeguarding, the school's own assessments of its strengths, and school improvement planning.
- The inspectors met with small groups of pupils to talk about their learning and to find out what they thought of the school. Inspectors also met with staff and governors. The lead inspector spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to parents informally at the start of the school day. They took into account 56 responses shown in the online questionnaire (Parent View) and also considered the school's own parent survey.
- The inspectors took note of 25 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Georgina Beasley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Colin Lower	Additional Inspector
Joyce Cox	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Edmund's Catholic Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- About two-thirds of pupils are from White British backgrounds, with the remainder from a number of different minority ethnic backgrounds.
- An above-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A well-below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and children with a parent in the armed services.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The school meets the government floor standards (which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment).
- The school does not access any alternative provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good, by:
 - ensuring that teachers have higher expectations of how well pupils achieve in their classes
 - setting work for all groups of pupils that challenges them to work harder and make better progress
 - providing pupils with tasks in mathematics that would challenge them more effectively to use their knowledge and understanding of number to solve problems.
- Raise boys' achievement in writing by ensuring that they:
 - act on the advice from teachers on how to improve their writing, especially in remembering to spell words correctly and to use correct grammar and punctuation
 - develop a fluent handwriting style that helps more of them to write more quickly and neatly.
- Raise achievement in the Reception class by applying information about the children's learning and progress to plan measured and appropriate interactions, and especially to ensure that boys make the same progress as girls in all areas of learning.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that systems for collecting, recording and analysing information about pupils' progress are robust enough for teachers, leaders and governors to:
 - check with rigour that all groups of pupils are making enough progress across the school, including those who are provided with additional support through pupil premium funding
 - take steps to speed up progress as soon as it slows or gaps in learning appear, especially in the Reception year and in mathematics and writing across the school
 - make accurate judgements about the quality of learning across the school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment in mathematics at the end of Year 6 has fallen since the previous inspection because pupils have not been making fast enough progress in their learning across the school. Progress has been faster this year and, as a result, standards are higher. However, work in books shows that tasks are still sometimes too easy for many pupils and do not challenge them to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Although most children make expected progress in Nursery and Reception from starting points broadly expected for their age, a significant number of boys do not make enough progress to reach the expected level in one or more of the learning areas. This means that overall the proportion of children reaching the expected standards in their personal, social and emotional development, physical development, communication and language, and in reading, writing and mathematics is lower, overall, than that seen locally and nationally.
- Pupils make expected progress, and some better than expected progress, in writing. Although most reach average standards, it is usually the boys who have weaker spelling, punctuation and grammar skills. Many still print their words and some form letters incorrectly, which slows down the speed and neatness with which they write.
- The small numbers of pupils in each year group who are supported by pupil premium funding are insufficient to provide reliable comparisons with national figures. However, they do, overall make expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics and reach the same levels as their classmates. This is because of the individual and small-group support that is provided for by the extra funding, and which has led to an improvement this year, especially in mathematics.
- Pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, pupils who speak English as an additional language and pupils who receive the pupil premium, make good progress in reading across the school. A greater proportion of pupils than that seen nationally reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check for the last two years. (Phonics is the knowledge of letters and the sounds that they make).
- The most able pupils make good progress to reach the higher levels of which they are capable in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make expected progress and many reach average standards at the end of Year 6.
- Regular sport and physical education lessons, partly funded by extra money from the government, are used to help pupils to understand the importance of eating healthy food as well as the advantages of taking regular exercise. Pupils develop their good computer skills by researching and presenting their learning across a range of different subjects.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Many teachers plan activities at different levels, for bronze, silver and gold ability groups which pupils understand clearly. More difficult tasks are consistently given to the most able pupils, helping them to learn well and make good progress. Tasks for other groups, however, are often too easy, and so do not usually help those pupils to make better than expected progress.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of pupils in mathematics. Apart from the most able pupils, pupils are not always given harder number problems to solve when teachers find that they finish the problems they are given easily and correctly.
- Teachers' comments on pupils' work, and their checking of progress against targets with the pupils, are inconsistently applied across the school. As a result, in some year groups pupils improve their work by themselves while in others they do not do this often enough.
- Adults in Reception do not use information about the children's learning and progress to plan when and how to interact with them when they are doing activities that they have chosen themselves, especially when they are learning outside. As a result, some children do not learn to persevere when they find some tasks difficult, and then move on too quickly to another activity.

- The teaching of reading is good. Pupils who need extra help receive daily individual support to help them use phonics skills to work out unfamiliar words and to talk about what is happening in stories. As a result, nearly all reach at least the expected reading level for their age. Older pupils use their good reading skills to successfully support their learning in a number of other subjects.
- Relationships between adults who work in the classroom and pupils are consistently positive. As a result, pupils are confident to ask questions to seek clarification about what they are learning and why. The least able pupils are confident to ask for help if they get stuck. The subsequent support and explanations by teachers or teaching assistants are effective in helping them understand what they should be doing.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement because some pupils do not have the positive attitudes that they need to enable them to make faster progress in lessons. Pupils do not always act upon teachers' advice to make sure that their next piece of work is better than their last. Some younger pupils do not listen attentively enough in lessons because they have not learnt to do this in the Reception year. As a result, their behaviour interrupts the flow of some lessons.
- The conduct and manners of older pupils are consistently better. Pupils in older classes provide good role models to younger pupils. They are polite to visitors, to adults who work in the school and to each other, and behave sensibly when moving about the school.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils talk knowledgeably about the different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and know what to do if they encounter any difficulties. The very rare incidents of poor behaviour and bullying are dealt with effectively. Parents who responded to the online questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive that their children feel safe at school, and many praised the school's good pastoral care.
- The school does not tolerate any form of discrimination, and everyone is treated equally. Consequently, relationships between pupils are positive. They respect each other's feelings and get along well together when playing outside. Older pupils act as buddies to younger pupils, which helps them feel safe and secure at school. Pupils are confident to let the school know what they do and do not like, informally through conversations with teachers, and formally through the school council.
- Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils line up and go into school quickly so that lessons can start on time.

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Systems for collecting and analysing information about pupils' progress are not robust enough to enable school leaders and governors to be certain that all groups of pupils are making enough progress in all year groups and subjects. Standards are checked three times a year but more stringent systems to pick up whether individuals and groups of pupils are making the progress they should during the year have only been introduced this year.
- A significant proportion of parents said that they do not feel well informed about their children's progress, both in the school's own survey and through their responses to the online survey 'Parent View'.
- The school has received support from the local authority to review the school's work and guide school leaders and governors in putting together a detailed improvement plan. Self-evaluation is now accurate. All staff, including subject coordinators, know what needs to be done, how to do it and by when.
- Teachers have been provided with the training that they need to help them check pupils' progress accurately. Procedures are now in place to link expectations for pupils' progress closely to teachers' performance targets, with mathematics being a whole-school focus this year. Teachers know that they must meet these challenging targets if they are to be awarded a pay

rise.

- The opportunities for pupils to take part in a broad range of activities in a number of different subjects help to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development strongly. Topics, clubs and varied artistic and musical activities enable pupils to learn about different countries and cultures.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors ensure all safeguarding requirements are met. They understand the requirements for staff performance management and ensure that any pay awards are based on staff reaching challenging targets for pupils' achievement. They check to make sure money is spent properly, including the extra funds for sport. They have been open to advice from the local authority and attended training to help them understand fully the progress pupils should be making from Nursery through to Year 6. Since receiving more up-to-date information about pupils' progress this year, they now know what is, and what is not, going well, and how well pupils are performing in comparison with other pupils nationally. They ask probing and challenging questions of the school about the standards pupils are reaching but have yet to ask the same high-level questions about how well pupils progress in their learning, including those who are provided with additional support through pupil premium funding.

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	123225
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	431429

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carole Sawyer
Headteacher (Acting)	Dianne Kelly
Date of previous school inspection	23 March 2009
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