

St Edward's Catholic Junior School

Hazell Avenue, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, HP21 7JF

Inspection dates 23–24 October 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The new headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has already checked on the quality of teaching to help teachers improve pupils' learning.
- Teaching is typically good over time.
- Pupils make good progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils leave the school in Year 6 with attainment that is well above the national average.
- Pupils generally behave well, and are polite to one another and the adults in the school. Staff manage the behaviour of pupils well.
- The school works well to keep pupils safe. Pupils say they feel safe and that instances of bullying are normally dealt with effectively by staff.
- The governing body provides a good level of challenge as well as supporting senior leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not outstanding. There are times when teachers do not check on how well pupils are learning and effectively question them to fully extend their thinking, especially for the most able.
- Marking does not consistently give pupils advice about how to improve their work.
- Subject leaders do not regularly check on the quality of teaching to provide guidance to teachers on how to improve.
- Pupils' progress in writing slows across Years 3 and 4.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning as they visited 13 lessons led by eight teachers. The lead inspector and headteacher observed three of these together.
- Meetings were held with senior staff; subject leaders; members of the governing body; a group of pupils; and a representative from the local authority.
- A range of documents were examined, including assessments showing pupils' progress; the school's own judgements about the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement; school action plans; the governing body minutes; and procedures for keeping pupils safe.
- Samples of pupils' work were examined and inspectors heard a number of pupils reading.
- Inspectors took into account 23 responses from parents who completed the Parent View questionnaire on the Ofsted website and the views of parents spoken to during the inspection.
- The responses from 18 Ofsted questionnaires completed by staff were examined.

Inspection team

James Henry, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Helen Owen

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Edward's is about the same size as similar schools.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Just under half come from Black Caribbean, Black African and Asian ethnic backgrounds.
- About one in eight pupils are known to be eligible for additional funding through the pupil premium. This provides extra funding for children who are looked after or pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. This is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or with special educational needs and are supported through school action is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is slightly below the national average.
- About one in five pupils speaks English as an additional language, which is above the national average.
- The headteacher and four new teachers were appointed in September 2014.
- A new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed in September 2014.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is typically outstanding by ensuring that:
 - teachers regularly check on how well pupils are learning and more effectively question them in order to fully extend their thinking, particularly for the most able
 - marking consistently provides guidance to help pupils improve their work
 - subject leaders regularly check on the quality of teaching to provide feedback to help teachers improve and ensure teachers share the good practice that exists in the school.
- Increase the rate at which pupils learn in writing across Years 3 and 4 by ensuring that pupils:
 - use their good vocabulary skills to produce longer and more detailed pieces of writing
 - are given consistent opportunities to write in different ways in other subjects
 - regularly review their writing in order to improve it further.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher, supported well by the deputy headteacher, has observed every member of staff teach. This has enabled her to gain a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the quality of teaching across the school.
- Senior leaders, led by the deputy headteacher, use regular assessments carefully to analyse the progress of different groups of pupils across the school. This information is used by the headteacher and deputy headteacher to manage the performance of teachers and hold them to account for the progress of pupils they teach.
- Senior leaders are developing good links with the local infant school to help pupils get off to a good start in Year 3.
- Subject leaders do not regularly check on the quality of teaching in their subjects. As a result, opportunities are missed to give staff guidance about how to improve their teaching and ensure teachers share the good practice that exists in the school.
- Pupils are taught a good balance of subjects to increase their knowledge and understanding. There are a range of activities that help foster pupils' personal development. For example, pupils go on a residential retreat to help them reflect and understand about themselves and the importance of listening to others.
- Assemblies develop pupils' tolerance towards different religions such as Islam, and religious customs such as Diwali, to help them live in modern Britain.
- Pupils have the opportunity to take part in school council elections, receive visits from local councillors and make trips to the Houses of Parliament. These activities promote pupils' understanding about the importance of the rule of law and how Britain is governed.
- The school fosters good relations and develops pupils' social and moral development. It involves them in supporting local and national charities that help the homeless and undertake work to develop communities in other countries.
- Safeguarding procedures are effective in helping keep pupils safe. All staff are checked before working in school and undertake appropriate child protection training.
- The extra sports funding is used well to employ sports coaches. They work with staff to develop their expertise in teaching sports and lead coaching sessions in dance, tennis and swimming. Funding has been spent on joining a local school sports partnership to enable pupils to take part in competitive sports.
- The school has increased the number of pupils taking part in sport but has not yet measured the difference this is making to their health and well-being.
- The additional funding is used to employ extra teachers to hear pupils read and help them with their mathematics. This is closing the achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and others nationally but has yet to be fully effective in closing the gap with other pupils in the school, especially in mathematics.
- A small minority of parents felt that communications with the school could be improved, especially in dealing with any concerns raised. The headteacher, senior leaders and the governing body realise this and are working towards establishing better communications and links with parents.
- The local authority provides a good level of support as the school manages the change in staff and senior leadership.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors visit the school regularly and are linked to different classes. This enables them to have an independent view of the quality of teaching. Governors undertake a variety of training and have a good understanding about how pupils' progress is measured. This is used to question senior leaders about the achievement of pupils, including the difference that extra funding is making to the progress of disadvantaged pupils. They are involved in systems to manage the performance of staff, including the headteacher. They are fully aware that any promotions are linked to the difference teachers make to pupils' progress and the overall quality of their teaching. Governors fulfil their legal duties, including regularly reviewing procedures to keep pupils safe.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils say that behaviour is typically good in lessons, around the school and in the dinner hall.

- Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Staff manage the behaviour of pupils well, especially those who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. Pupils respond well to the consistent use of the school's system of merits to reward good behaviour and different coloured cards to sanction any poor behaviour.
- Pupils say they enjoy school. Observations in lessons show pupils work hard and are keen to learn.
- Pupils can lose concentration when activities do not fully interest or challenge them. This can cause some pupils to fidget and chat to each other rather than fully pay attention to the teacher.
- Most parents who completed the Parent View survey on the Ofsted website felt that the school makes sure pupils behave well.
- Pupils contribute positively to school life. They are normally polite and well mannered to each other and to the adults in the school. For example, pupils routinely open doors for others and older pupils act as mediators in the playground to help resolve minor squabbles.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and that bullying is rare. There is very little name-calling of any kind, including that of a racist or homophobic nature. Pupils say they have confidence in staff to deal with any problems that may arise.
- The very large majority of parents who completed the Parent View questionnaire thought that their child feels safe at school.
- The school works well to help pupils keep themselves safe. For example, pupils are taught how to stay safe when using the internet. Older pupils are taught basic first-aid skills and about the dangers of smoking and using drugs. Pupils are helped to stay safe on the roads through training about riding their bikes safely.
- Pupils are normally in school on time and the importance of good attendance is stressed by the school. As a result, attendance over time is above the national average.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and generally plan lessons well to match the abilities of different groups of pupils, including the most able.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils. For example, they expect pupils to concentrate, work hard and behave well in lessons.
- Pupils generally respond well to teachers' questions and the tasks they are given.
- Pupils' work and school information of pupils' progress shows teaching over time to be typically good, especially in reading. Consequently, pupils make good progress overall.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the progress made by different groups of pupils. They provide effective support to disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils who are learning to speak English. As a result, they can take a full part in lessons. This is also an example of how the school ensures all pupils have an equal opportunity to learn and none is discriminated against.
- Teachers prepare pupils well for their start at secondary school through ensuring pupils have a high level of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Information on the progress of individual pupils is used well by teachers to ensure that any that may be falling behind are helped to catch up with their peers.
- There are occasions when teachers do not check on how well pupils understand what they are learning or when questioning does not fully extend their thinking. This hinders the progress pupils make, particularly for the most able.
- Pupils sometimes struggle to improve their work because teachers' marking does not consistently provide guidance to help pupils know what to do next to move on.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter the school with attainment above the national average. Attainment over time at the end of Year 6 is high. For example, pupils left the school in 2014 with levels in reading, writing and mathematics that were well above the 2013 national average.
- Observations in lessons, pupils' work and school assessments show that all groups of pupils make good progress overall in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds also achieve well.

- The most able make good progress. The proportion of pupils who achieved the higher levels in the national tests in 2014 in reading, writing and mathematics was well above the 2013 national average.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, disabled pupils or those with special educational needs make good progress. This is because they are well supported and given extra help to ensure they take a full part in lessons.
- The school works effectively to improve the rate at which pupils learn in reading. All pupils are heard reading regularly, with extra help for pupils who may be falling behind. Consequently, pupils develop good language skills and make especially good progress in reading.
- School assessments show that overall progress in writing is not as quick as in reading and mathematics across Years 3 and 4. This is mainly because teachers do not ensure pupils use their good language skills to write at length and in detail. In addition, pupils do not always have regular opportunities to think about, and further improve, their writing. Pupils are not consistently given the chance to use their writing skills in different ways in other subjects. The school closes the achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils in the school and all pupils nationally. When compared with the most recent national test results, disadvantaged pupils by the end of Year 6 in 2014 were over two terms ahead of all pupils nationally in reading and writing, and about half a term ahead in mathematics. When compared with other pupils in the school, disadvantaged pupils left the school in 2014 over one term ahead in reading and about two terms behind in writing and mathematics.

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	110475
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	449342

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	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Audrey Lillywhite
Headteacher	Suzette Harris
Date of previous school inspection	29 March 2011
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