

St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

St Mary's Street, Bungay, Suffolk NR35 1AY

Inspection dates

10–11 July 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders, governors and trustees have been successful in improving the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Teaching is good because leaders have made clear their expectations and provided support to enable teachers to teach well.
- The standards achieved by pupils currently in Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics are high. Almost every pupil achieved or exceeded the standard expected for their age.
- Governors and trustees provide a good balance of support and challenge for leaders. They are realistic in their view of the school but, together with leaders, are ambitious for its further development.
- Leaders have been successful in developing partnerships with parents and carers. Parental feedback provided during the inspection was almost entirely positive and parents have confidence in the school.
- Leaders provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. As a result, pupils develop into caring, thoughtful and well-rounded individuals by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and at playtimes. They respect their teachers and enjoy coming to school. Consequently, the vast majority of pupils attend well.
- Children get off to a good start in early years. Adults ensure that they know children's needs right from the start by visiting pre-schools and talking with parents. Consequently, parents say that their children settle quickly.
- Support provided for some disadvantaged pupils is not focused precisely enough on their individual needs to enable them to meet the standard expected for them in reading.
- Progress in some subjects, such as history and geography, is not as consistently strong as in English and mathematics because the curriculum is not taught in sufficient depth.
- Some middle leaders are not yet fulfilling their roles as effectively as others and do not make best use of assessment information to identify where pupils' progress is strongest or needs further improvement.
- Teaching does not consistently challenge the most able pupils to achieve the higher standard that they are capable of reaching.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teachers more consistently plan tasks that challenge and extend the more able pupils so that the proportion who exceed the standard expected of them continues to rise in each year group.
- Strengthen the progress of some disadvantaged pupils in reading by identifying more precisely the support needed for individuals and tracking its impact in greater depth.
- Ensure that pupils make consistently good progress in all classes in subjects such as history and geography, by improving the quality and depth of the wider curriculum and making learning tasks more purposeful.
- Continue to develop the role of middle leaders so that all are equally effective by ensuring that:
 - leaders use assessment more consistently to identify where progress is best and where it needs to be strengthened
 - plans for improvement are sharper and more focused on the impact that is needed.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the predecessor school was inspected in 2014, the school has suffered a period of instability with staff changes and temporary leadership, which resulted in a further decline in standards. Since the school joined the multi-academy trust and the current executive headteacher's appointment in 2016, there has been much greater stability and significant improvements in standards.
- The executive headteacher and head of school work together well. They have complementary skills which are used effectively to improve the school. Leaders are knowledgeable about the school because they regularly check the quality of teaching and learning. They challenge practice that is not helping pupils to learn effectively and provide clear guidance on what staff need to do to improve. This has ensured that teaching is good across the school.
- Leaders, governors and trustees work together well. They know the school's strengths and where improvements need to be made. They are ambitious and determined to build on existing strengths to further improve.
- All those who responded to Ofsted's staff questionnaire said that leaders support them well. All respondents said that they feel valued and respected and enjoy working at the school. Leaders provide effective support for professional development, for example by providing advisers to work with staff, and opportunities to work with other schools in the trust to share good practice.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Leaders plan carefully opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, although the school is a faith school, leaders ensure that pupils learn about people with different faiths and none. Leaders instil positive values, through assemblies and class discussions, and so pupils know right from wrong. As a result, pupils leave the school as caring, well-rounded and thoughtful individuals.
- Leaders have established positive relationships with parents. They have rebuilt confidence in the school. Parents spoken to during the inspection were universally positive about the school. Typical of the views of many was a comment by one parent who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. The parent said, 'in the last two years since we had a new headteacher and a strong well-supported head of school, my confidence in the school has grown immensely and I can see the excellent progress my children are making.' Another parent similarly commented, 'The school provides a safe and welcoming environment to nurture children as they learn and develop. There is a wonderful feeling of community within the school, and children of all ages support and care for each other.'
- Leaders ensure that pupils benefit from a broad curriculum. Pupils told the inspector that they especially like the themed weeks held by the school, such as the recent Congo week, where pupils learned about another culture while developing their creative skills. Pupils also enjoy a good range of sporting activities, many provided by the well-used physical education and sport premium. Pupils enjoy taking part in competitions and events with other schools. They benefit from an expanding range of after-school clubs, such as those for cricket, Spanish and computing. In some year

groups, the curriculum taught in subjects such as history and geography does not develop pupils' learning in sufficient depth.

- Middle leaders are developing their roles in improving teaching and learning across the two schools in the federation. While some are proving effective, others are not using assessment sufficiently well to identify where pupils are making good progress and where progress is not strong enough. As a result, some improvement plans are not focused accurately enough on the areas where improvements could be made. Plans are sometimes too focused on the actions taken rather than the impact of actions on improving teaching and learning.

Governance of the school

- Minutes of meetings from committees, and those of the full governing body and trustees, show that governors and trustees are rigorous in their challenge of leaders. For example, governors questioned leaders about the difference in pupils' performance in different year groups and actions planned to address this. Governors and trustees work well together, with good systems for sharing important information to ensure that swift action is taken when needed. An example of this is the way the trust responded to a staff absence to ensure that pupils' learning was not impeded.
- Governors and trustees have high expectations for the school but, alongside this, provide good support for leaders. For example, they supported leaders in developing assessment systems, running moderation sessions to check assessments, providing professional development opportunities and providing external evaluations of the school.
- The trust is relatively new, only created in 2016, and some systems are still developing. Trustees are thorough in checking that funding, such as that for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities and for disadvantaged pupils, is used as it should be. However, they have not analysed in sufficient detail the impact that this funding has had, especially in relation to the progress of some disadvantaged pupils in reading.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that keeping pupils safe is central to the work of the school. Training for staff is carried out regularly and is effective. This is shown by concerns forms completed by staff, which show that they know how to identify when a pupil is at risk of harm. Leaders follow up concerns appropriately, working with external agencies to ensure that action is taken when needed. Leaders are knowledgeable about the particular safeguarding concerns relevant to their community. Consequently, they have employed a parent support adviser who works with parents who need help to develop a better understanding of how to care for their children at home. Checks on staff employed at the school are carried out according to statutory requirements and are recorded thoroughly.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and that there is always an adult to speak to if they are concerned or worried. Parents agree that the school is a safe place. Pupils

know how to keep themselves safe online because they are taught about this regularly. Leaders have worked with parents to ensure that they too understand the possible risks to their child when using technologies.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers know what is expected of pupils by the end of the year for each year group in their mixed-aged classes. They plan tasks that are appropriately pitched to enable the majority of pupils to meet the expected standard for their age. They use assessment increasingly effectively to check the progress pupils are making and plan tasks to address gaps in learning.
- Pupils and adults have good relationships so learning in lessons is trouble free. Teachers know pupils well in this small school and create a climate where pupils are confident to ask for help when they need it.
- Teachers make sure that classrooms are welcoming, with good displays; pupils' work is celebrated and valued in classes and around the school.
- Some teachers use questioning very effectively and ask pupils to explain their thinking. For example, in mathematics, a teacher asked pupils to explain how they knew the difference between types of triangles.
- Teachers develop pupils' vocabulary well, introducing subject-specific vocabulary when appropriate and by using texts that expand pupils' word knowledge. During the inspection, for example, a teacher encouraged pupils to 'read around the word' to help them understand an unfamiliar word in context.
- Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge in English and mathematics in particular, providing clear explanations and using unplanned opportunities for learning well. For example, when a pupil answered a question using the word 'horrible', the teacher asked the class to identify synonyms for the word.
- Additional adults support learning well, providing sensitive support when needed but also allowing pupils to develop independence in their learning.
- The teaching of phonics is mostly effective and the majority of pupils develop good phonic skills, which they apply to their reading and writing.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in writing in some subjects other than English. For example, pupils write at length in religious education (RE), rewriting their own versions of stories from the Bible and creating fact sheets about other faiths. However, they have fewer opportunities to write in some other subjects, such as history and geography.
- Teachers develop pupils' independence by providing challenges at different levels and giving pupils responsibility for identifying the most appropriate challenge. This often works effectively and pupils told the inspector that they know they should choose a challenge that is not too easy or too hard for them. Occasionally, pupils select inappropriate challenges and this is not always swiftly identified by teachers.
- Teachers provide feedback to pupils in line with school policy. This is often effective. For example, in Year 6 the teacher provided a probing question in response to the pupil's correct work so that the pupil then applied their knowledge within a different

context.

- Teaching does not consistently extend the most able pupils. Sometimes, teachers provide tasks that are too easy for them and do not provide opportunities for them to apply their learning more widely. This was especially evident in mathematics.
- Teaching in some subjects, such as history and geography, does not enable pupils to develop in-depth knowledge and understanding in these subjects. Tasks are sometimes superficial and lack challenge because teachers' expectations of pupils in these subjects are not as high as in English and mathematics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy school. They like their teachers and other adults in the school and told the inspector that adults help them to learn.
- Leaders provide lots of opportunity for pupils to develop their leadership skills, for example, as part of the junior council, as a playtime peer mediator and as a 'Mini Vinnie' leading fund-raising activities for charities. Consequently, pupils are confident and articulate. They enjoy talking to adults and are proud of their work and their school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils learn about different countries and cultures in lessons and as part of themed weeks such as 'Congo week'. The school's Catholic ethos is evident throughout the school, and pupils demonstrate a strong sense of right and wrong. They recognise that everyone is different and know to treat everyone with respect.
- Teachers promote positive attitudes to learning. They regularly remind pupils about 'learning powers', such as resilience and perseverance. As a result, the majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Occasionally, when tasks are less engaging, some pupils lose interest and do not concentrate as well as they should.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that bullying was extremely rare at St Edmund's and that any incidents were always dealt with swiftly by staff. Each class has a 'worry box', which pupils can use so that teachers can sensitively address any concerns that pupils may have. Parents have particularly welcomed this as pupils prepare to move classes and those in Year 6 move schools.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. They are respectful towards adults, for example, holding doors open and responding to directions, and towards each other. They know the importance of listening to each other and taking turns because they are given lots of opportunities to work together in groups and pairs

within lessons. One pupil told the inspector, 'As a small school, we have to share resources and learn to get along together.'

- At playtimes, pupils play sensibly, older and younger pupils together. Peer mediators take their roles seriously in helping to resolve any squabbles that occur. Occasionally, some pupils' play is a little boisterous and does not take account of the effect on nearby pupils.
- Attendance is above national averages because pupils enjoy coming to school. Leaders work closely with any parent where their child's attendance is lower to impress upon them the importance of regular attendance. As a result, only a very small proportion of pupils are persistently absent and attendance of most of these pupils is improving.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- The proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard at the end of Year 6 in 2017 was above national averages in reading and mathematics and in line for writing. Recent unvalidated results for 2018 indicate that attainment has risen still higher. The improvement in outcomes is due to the effective teaching in this year group.
- In Year 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in 2017 was in line with that found nationally. Recent results indicate that this will also be the case in 2018. However, the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standard is lower than in the previous year.
- The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check in 2017 was slightly above that found nationally and likely to be similar in 2018. This is because the teaching of phonics is effective.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's assessment information show that the majority of pupils make good progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics. However, there is some variability in the proportion of pupils making strong progress because some teaching, while good, is not to the same high standard as the best teaching.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported by adults who know their needs well. As a result, the majority make good progress from their starting points.
- Some most-able pupils do not make as much progress as they should do because teaching is not consistently challenging for these pupils.
- Some disadvantaged pupils do not make rapid enough progress in reading because the support provided for them is insufficiently well tailored towards their needs.
- In subjects such as history and geography, the progress of some pupils is not as strong as it is in English and mathematics. This is because some teaching does not enable pupils to develop a deep understanding of these subjects.

Early years provision

Good

- The proportion of children achieving the early learning goals in 2017 was in line with that found nationally. In 2018, this proportion has increased because teaching is effective in ensuring that the small number of Reception-aged children have their

needs well met in the mixed Year 1/Reception class and so make good progress from their differing starting points.

- Adults have created an engaging learning environment for early years children. Resources are well organised and accessible so that children develop independence in fetching them and tidying away.
- Adults provide a good range of learning tasks indoors and outdoors. For example, during the inspection, early years children were working outside on a range of phonics activities. These included 'fishing' for sounds and matching them to word cards and finding sounds in the sand tray and using them to write words. Provision for developing children's phonic knowledge is strong and children are able to use their awareness of sounds when reading and writing.
- Additional adults support learning well. They use the detailed plans provided for them and ask questions that develop children's understanding.
- All adults make their expectations of behaviour very clear right from the start. Year 1 pupils provide good role models of how to behave. Consequently, children in early years behave well. They share resources well and take turns sensibly. Children show persistence in tackling tasks, including when playing independently.
- Parents are encouraged to be involved in their child's learning, for example, by contributing to the school's online assessment system. Adults visit pre-school settings and meet with parents prior to children starting at the school. Consequently, parents spoken to during the inspection told the inspector that their children settle well because adults have a good understanding of their child's needs right from the start.
- Leadership of early years is effective. Careful thought has been given as to how to meet the needs of both Year 1 pupils and early years children in the class. Leaders make sure that both groups benefit from time with the class teacher and with the teaching assistant, as well as time to work independently.
- Leaders assess children's progress thoroughly and use this to plan future learning activities. However, sometimes what is recorded in learning journeys is too general and does not record specifically the individual child's achievements and next steps.
- Few children exceed the standard expected for them because some most-able children are not given tasks that will extend them and enable them to meet this higher standard.
- The current very small cohort of children does not include any disadvantaged children or children who have SEN and/or disabilities, so it is not possible to comment on provision for these groups in early years.

School details

Unique reference number	142770
Local authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	10046652

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	91
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Harris
Executive headteacher	Veronica Short
Telephone number	01986 892502
Website	www.st-edmundsrc.suffolk.sch.uk
Email address	headteacher@cpswv.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is federated with a neighbouring school with which it shares an executive headteacher and head of school. The school is part of St John the Baptist Catholic Multi-Academy Trust. The school has a local governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum standards expected for pupils at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school is a smaller school than is found on average nationally.
- The majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is similar to that found nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities or who are supported by an education, health and care plan, or statement of special educational needs, is around the national average.
- Pupils are taught in four mixed-aged classes, the composition of which is different in

the mornings and the afternoons.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed lessons in all classes. Most observations were carried out jointly with the head of school or executive headteacher.
- The inspector looked at pupils' books, school assessment information, leaders' evaluation of teaching and learning, and at a range of school documents.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day and met with some pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6.
- The inspectors spoke with three governors and three members of the academy trust.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils were examined, including mandatory checks made during the recruitment of new staff.

Inspection team

Maria Curry, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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