



Inspection report

St Edmund's CE Primary School

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 122741
LEA Nottinghamshire

Inspection number 274684
Inspection dates 27 and 28 April 2005
Reporting inspector Mr J S Hardwick HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Type of School	Primary	School address	Church Hill Avenue
School category	Voluntary Controlled		Mansfield Woodhouse
	<i>Diocese of Southwell</i>		Mansfield
Age range of pupils	3 to 11 years		Nottinghamshire
			NG19 9JU
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01623 646624
Number on roll	282 full-time	Fax number	01623 651367
	40 part-time		
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs C M Brown
Date of previous inspection	June, July and	Headteacher	Mrs C Middleton
	September 2003		

Age group	Published	Reference no.
3 to 11 years	7 June 2005	274684

Introduction

When St Edmund's CE Primary School was inspected in June, July and September 2003, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education. Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) subsequently visited the school on four occasions to monitor its progress, and reinspected the school in April 2005.

Description of the school

St Edmund's CE Primary School serves an area of mixed housing in Mansfield Woodhouse, a small town in north Nottinghamshire. The pupils are mostly of white British heritage: the proportion entitled to free school meals is similar to the national average, and the proportion who have been identified as having special educational needs is average. The pupils' attainment on entry to the nursery covers the range expected for pupils of this age.

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Overall effectiveness of the school

In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils.

Since taking up position in Easter 2004, the headteacher has led St Edmund's with drive and determination. She has been particularly aided by good support from senior staff, the hard work of the teachers and help from the local education authority (LEA). The quality of teaching has improved: it is usually at least satisfactory and often good, and as a consequence the pupils are making faster progress in lessons. However, standards are below what they should be, especially at Key Stage 2, and this is reflected in national test results that have been below or well below average. The pupils are well behaved and mostly respond well in lessons. They make a very good start in the Foundation Stage, where they quickly settle into routines and learn to enjoy school. This is built on successfully during Key Stage 1, where the pupils make good progress, but at Key Stage 2 a few of the pupils are inattentive and do not achieve what they might from the lessons; the pupils' progress at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall but not sufficient for some of them to make up lost ground. Though rising, the pupils' attendance has been persistently below the national average.

Improvement since the last inspection

The inspection of 2003 required the school to address key issues concerned with standards, the quality of teaching, leadership and management and governance. There has been reasonable progress in relation to standards and teaching and good progress in other respects.

Capacity to improve

The school is well placed to continue improving. Staffing has been strengthened and become much more stable. Under the leadership of the headteacher, the teachers have been clearly focused on improving their practice and raising standards. There is a comprehensive programme for monitoring the school's performance, which includes a strategic role for the governing body and involves key co-ordinators in checking the work in different subjects. An improvement plan identifies the major priorities and necessary actions for the school's further development.

What the school should do to improve further

The key priorities for the school's development plan are to:

- continue to raise standards, especially at Key Stage 2;

- continue to improve the teaching at Key Stage 2;
- improve the pupils' attitudes in Key Stage 2;
- raise levels of attendance.

Achievement and standards

The pupils make a very good start in the Foundation Stage: overall they reach the standards expected for five-year-olds and some go beyond this level. The pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 is good, though previously inconsistent provision has meant that this has not been reflected in national tests results, which were below average in 2004. The currently higher standards are represented in the pupils' secure grasp of letter sounds, as a basis for reading and writing, in their understanding of number sentences, and in the Year 2 pupils' ability to write punctuated sentences.

The picture at Key Stage 2, though improving, is more mixed and, overall, the pupils do not achieve what they might. The school's national test results for Year 6 pupils rose considerably in 2004, when compared with the previous year, but they were still well below average. Nonetheless, the school is keeping a close check on each pupil's performance and is adjusting provision to provide booster work and a greater degree of challenge.

Personal development

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour in the younger classes were at least good and mostly very good. In the Foundation Stage they learn to share, take turns and enjoy school. In Key Stage 1 the pupils were keen, settled instantly to work and concentrated for long periods. In Key Stage 2, the pupils' attitudes and behaviour were at least satisfactory and sometimes good. The pupils did as they were told and were generally interested but they sometimes needed reminders about listening and keeping focused on a task, and a few of them wasted time chattering.

Around the school and at break times, the pupils' behaviour was good. The pupils take due care of materials and equipment and they undertake responsibilities seriously; the school council members, for example, spoke enthusiastically about their meetings and the decisions they had made. The pupils' attendance rose last year to 93.1 per cent but remained below the national average of 94.5 per cent.

Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. The school's strengths are in its good range of after-school clubs, visits to support work including a residential stay, and in the lively assemblies that promote a sense of caring as well as reflection on moral and spiritual issues. The success of the social and moral provision is reflected in the way pupils play together at break and readily co-operate in groups and discussions. Although the Key Stage 2 pupils receive French lessons, the

weakest aspect of provision is related to multicultural work, which is under-represented in the curriculum and displays.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching was good in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. This is a considerable improvement since 2003, when a quarter of the teaching was unsatisfactory, pointing to the hard work of the staff in acting on training and advice.

The lessons were all well planned, prepared and organised, and based on appropriate learning objectives that were shared with the pupils at the outset and then revisited at the conclusion to check on what had been achieved. The additional adults made skilful contributions to the lessons, particularly during group work. The stronger teaching was marked out by a sense of urgency, a brisk pace based on well-understood routines and careful checks on the pupils' understanding before moving on. Weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory teaching related to tolerating too much time-wasting and chatter at points in the lesson, thereby reducing the pupils' progress.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, but with an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Appropriate links are being drawn between subjects to bring coherence and relevance to the programme of work. Because of the building, the school has had difficulty in teaching information and communication technology efficiently, but the recent purchase of a set of laptop computers has helped to overcome the problem.

Since 2003, the school has introduced a good system for tracking the pupils' progress. There are regular assessments in the core subjects to check what has been gained each term in relation to National Curriculum levels. The school has responded appropriately to the outcomes, for instance by regrouping pupils, giving renewed emphasis to particular aspects of work and arranging booster groups. The system is complemented by individual targets that are held in the pupils' exercise books, and by well-considered comments in the teachers' marking.

The school's accommodation is poorly designed for its current needs. Only one classroom in the main building is self-contained and noise readily transfers from one area to another. The teachers and pupils have grown used to the problems and learned to focus on their own lessons, but nonetheless the legitimate sound from an adjacent room is sometimes obtrusive.

Due regard is paid to the pupils' safety, health and general well-being. For example, a longstanding issue has recently been resolved by the erection of a security fence to separate the playing area from a public footpath that cut through the school grounds. There are good relationships in the school; the pupils are well known to the adults, who readily offer help when it is needed.

Leadership and management

The headteacher took up the substantive post in January 2005, having been deputy headteacher, and then acting headteacher for two terms. Her leadership and management have been good. She has led the school with drive and determination, ensuring that the agenda set by the action plan has been fulfilled. The headteacher has been well supported by senior staff, who have led important aspects of the school's work and set good role models in their own teaching. With the recent appointment of a deputy headteacher, the school's staffing is much stronger and more stable than it was in 2003.

The co-ordinators have been drawn more closely into the leadership of each subject, following their own action plans, to broaden the management expertise within the school.

The programmes for monitoring, meetings, and release for staff for school-wide tasks have been laid out clearly in advance, aiding communication and clarity of purpose. There is a thorough regime for monitoring the critical aspects of the school's performance, including test results, the quality of teaching and the pupils' work.

The governors for their part, under the leadership of a new chair, have become much more proactive in the school's affairs. They fulfil their responsibilities by holding the senior staff to account and, for example, by making first-hand observations in school and reporting their findings, and by joining school events. The chair of governors has been appropriately involved in drafting draft strategic plans, alongside the headteacher, for the school's next stage of development; the priorities that have been identified match the school's needs.

Increased confidence in the school, among the parents and the community, is reflected in the work of the parent-teacher association and in fund-raising. The LEA too, having provided much very effective support, has begun to reduce its input in recognition of the school's growing ability to act with autonomy.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

St Edmund's CE Primary School was inspected by an Additional Inspector and HMI in June, July and September 2003 under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in January, May and September 2004, and in January 2005 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of September 2003.

In April 2005, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, and was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

During the visit 18 parts of lessons and two assemblies were inspected. The pupils' conduct was observed around the school and on the playground at break and lunchtimes, and samples of their work were inspected. Discussions were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the co-ordinator for Key Stage 1. Account was taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of June, July and September 2003 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

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