



St Edmund's RC Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105527
LEA Manchester
Inspection number 277370
Inspection dates 12 July 2006 to 13 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mr Jon Lovgreen CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Upper Monsall Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Miles Platting
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Manchester M40 8NG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0161 2051700
Number on roll	153	Fax number	0161 2034658
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Rev Father Buckley
Date of previous inspection	28 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Maureen Duffy

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Edmund's is a smaller than average school, but pupil numbers are growing. It serves a disadvantaged area just outside central Manchester. Two thirds of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The number who join or leave during the school year is twice that usually found. A higher than average number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds but very few are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Edmund's is a good school with some outstanding aspects. This matches the school's view of its overall effectiveness. At its heart is its commitment to its mission of guiding and supporting both the individual child and the family. As a result, pupils are very well cared for. Their personal development flourishes. They are taught to respect and appreciate what others do for them, and so learn how to take responsibility themselves. Behaviour is excellent - pupils are very keen to learn and they show much consideration for others. Good teaching and learning result in pupils making good progress because of well planned and imaginative lessons. Assessment is good but marking does not give clear enough advice about how to make progress. Standards are improving as a result of this good teaching and are broadly average at the end of Year 6, but pupils in Key Stage 2 could do better in writing. The school is well led and managed. The headteacher provides strong leadership which expects a lot from teachers but gives much support in return. Thorough monitoring and evaluation give a clear view of what needs to improve. However, strategies for bringing this about sometimes lack a sharp enough focus on how they will improve pupils' learning. Subject leaders work well but do not yet have a precise enough understanding of how children learn best in their subjects. The curriculum is good and pupils love the outstanding range of extra activities which the school provides. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and results in pupils achieving well.

The school has the confidence of parents, who appreciate the very positive impact it has on their lives. Care, guidance and support are excellent. Parents speak highly of the school: their children 'get a real buzz from it'. The school gives good value for money. It has good capacity to improve and has shown good improvement since the last inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing in Key Stage 2.
- In marking work, provide pupils with precise guidance about what they need to concentrate on next to make further progress.
- Develop subject leaders' skills in evaluating how best to improve pupils' learning, including ensuring that there is a sharper focus in improvement planning on the impact of actions to promote learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are rising. Pupils start school with well below average standards, especially in language. They get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage where teachers identify their needs, giving them well planned and stimulating activities. As a result, they make good progress. In Key Stage 1, pupils take more responsibility for their work and reach standards which, whilst still below average, also represent good progress. The school was rightly concerned about results

in the 2005 Year 6 national tests. Pupils could have done better. A searching review by school managers saw key issues identified and strategies put in place to improve pupils' progress in mathematics and science. As a result, pupils at present in Year 6 are making good progress and standards are broadly average. The school is on course to exceed most of its challenging targets for these pupils. However, writing remains a weakness because pupils are unclear about how to alter style, length and vocabulary to suit who they are writing for and the effect they are trying to create. Careful attention to children's needs results in those with language or learning difficulties making very good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils enjoy school, as seen in their very positive attitudes and excellent behaviour. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average but this represents a significant year on year improvement as a result of the popular incentives put in place by the school such as 'Own Clothes Day' and the monthly 'Ice Cream Party' for the class with the best attendance. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community and an outstanding contribution to their school community. They take on a range of responsibilities to help the other children, acting as 'playground buddies', prefects and 'first aiders' to make sure that younger children are safe and happy in and around school. This gives all children valuable lessons in how to help others. Pupils' commitment to racial harmony can be seen in the way that they work and play happily together. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent as demonstrated by the high quality of relationships within the school. They take advantage of the many opportunities offered to make positive choices about regular exercise and eating healthily. Good achievement in literacy and numeracy, added to improving attendance and punctuality, prepare pupils well for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils clearly enjoy their lessons and work together with purpose. Teachers organise lessons well and their enthusiasm leads to pupils' excellent behaviour and desire to succeed. This was evident in a dance lesson where pupils learned to synchronise ideas and moves so that disciplined movement and enjoyment were combined. Pupils think carefully about what they are studying. Teachers are particularly good at using pupils' ideas to encourage good class discussion, as seen in a lesson about recycling issues and how to get the message about this across to others. Pupils are taught to speak confidently and to explain things carefully although, at times, they lack the specialist vocabulary to do this accurately. Written work is usually neat and well organised but too few pupils adapt style and vocabulary to match audience and purpose. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution.

They are involved in planning activities and show initiative in deciding how best to help pupils.

Assessment is good. Regular tests check how well pupils are doing so that pupils whose progress slackens are quickly identified and action taken. Marking is satisfactory. It is regular, praising what is done well and guiding improvement, but systems vary too much between classes. As a result, pupils understand their targets but are not always clear about the next steps they need to take to achieve them, particularly in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, meeting pupils' differing needs well. There is a strong emphasis on the importance of literacy and numeracy but other subjects also get good attention, with many being taught in themes which can involve research, visits or visitors to school. Pupils talk enthusiastically of learning what life was like in Victorian mills, and about their recycling project. However, planning to ensure that writing skills are systematically included in the curriculum is not specific enough. The expertise of partner secondary schools allows pupils to use high quality information and communication technology (ICT) equipment, learn French in Years 4 and 6 and have specialist science and technology lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties are well catered for, with extra or intensive support given.

Pupils relish the huge range of clubs and activities. Music, sport and art are notable strengths because careful use is made of staff enthusiasms, and of specialist coaching. There is an activity to suit everyone because adults make considerable efforts to design this aspect of the school's work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils get high quality care and support. Health and safety issues are stressed continuously and pupils are actively encouraged to look after each other. A variety of visitors help give them a very clear understanding of how to keep safe both in school and beyond. The governing body has been instrumental in improving the safety of the immediate area. Pupils are very confident in the commitment of the staff to support them and their learning because 'teachers help us with our problems and sort everything out'. Child protection procedures are in place. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and are given the support they need to make good progress. Throughout the school progress is tracked closely, underachievement identified, and support provided so that pupils and parents are given clear guidance. Families are well known and the school communicates regularly and very well with them so that they feel involved in it, a typical comment being, 'The school is like one big family. They take good care of everyone'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership and have guided the school successfully through a period of great change. Working together, they have set a clear direction for the school, with a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development and raising standards. The result is an inclusive school, with pupils from a variety of backgrounds and abilities being welcomed and helped to make good progress. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and has clear plans to improve. These would benefit from a sharper focus on how the actions in these plans will improve pupils' learning. Leadership is beginning to be shared with staff throughout the school, but subject leaders are not yet sufficiently involved in sharing the good practice within the school. Some have too little idea of what aspects of teaching help pupils learn most effectively in their subjects. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. There are clear systems put in place to make sure that children are regularly assessed and that any child with a specific need is helped to make good progress.

The school works very well with a variety of agencies and partners. It has an excellent reputation locally, as parents' very positive views and the rising pupil numbers show. It is well resourced and staffed, and provides good value for money. The governing body is very supportive. When necessary, governors help the school by asking the challenging questions which enable the school to improve. Having made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and good progress this year, the school shows a good capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for the thoughtful and polite welcome you gave us when we visited your school and for helping us by telling us honestly what you thought about school.

We agree with you that St Edmund's is a good school where you are really well looked after by all the adults who work there. As a result, they help you to become more and more caring and considerate. You appreciate how hard teachers are working to plan interesting lessons. You work very hard and your behaviour is excellent. The responsibilities you are given make you realise that things are much better, and more pleasant, when everyone works together. This goes beyond the classroom so that you are very sensible in the way you move around school and play during lunch. You also thoroughly enjoy the many extra things you can do in clubs, such as all those for sports, music, and art work. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors are working hard to improve your school and they are succeeding.

Of course, improvements can always be made and so we have asked the school to do three things to help you do even better:

- help you to become better at writing by teaching you how to vary the style and words you use to match who you are writing for
- give you a clearer idea when your work is marked about exactly what you need to work at next to do better
- check closely what helps you learn best in different subjects so that teaching gets better and better.

You can do your bit by continuing to bring your 'smiles and good manners' to school, and working hard - both for your own sake and to help others.