



St Edward's Catholic First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110031
LEA Windsor and Maidenhead LEA
Inspection number 278352
Inspection dates 23 January 2006 to 24 January 2006
Reporting inspector Graham Lee AI

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

Type of school	First	School address	Parsonage Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Windsor
Age range of pupils	5 to 9		SL4 5EN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01753 860607
Number on roll	193	Fax number	01753 869107
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Katherine Horler
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2000	Headteacher	Mrs P Chudziak

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Edward's is a popular and over-subscribed Catholic First School. Three quarters of pupils are of White British heritage with a few from other white backgrounds, notably Irish. A minority of pupils come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. Very few are at the early stages of learning English. Considerably fewer pupils than usual have learning difficulties. The school draws pupils from a wide area and very few are entitled to free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Edward's is an outstanding school and provides excellent value for money. In its desire to continually do better the school judges its performance to be good, underestimating its current outstanding effectiveness. A strong and caring Catholic ethos is at the heart of its endeavours and the care and guidance of pupils are outstanding. As a result, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are exemplary. The school is held in high regard by parents. The headteacher is an excellent leader who provides purpose and direction to all aspects of the school's work. She is ably supported by an experienced deputy head, effective governing body and committed and enthusiastic staff. The school has made many improvements since its last successful inspection and has the skills and determination to be even better. Children quickly settle into the Reception class, because the curriculum is lively and they are supported well. They make good progress and exceed the goals set for them at the end of the year. Pupils of all abilities make rapid progress and reach high standards because they are well taught. In a few lessons teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to express their ideas and demonstrate their understanding. The curriculum provides pupils with an outstanding range of opportunities within the school day and in the many additional activities that enrich and develop learning.

What the school should do to improve further

* To ensure that all teaching is of the highest quality, share the best practice in giving pupils sufficient opportunities to discuss their ideas and deepen their understanding.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupil's achievement is outstanding and they are extremely well prepared for their transition to middle school at the age of nine. Children enter the school with varied experience but overall their skills and understanding are above average. In the one or two terms they spend in the Reception class they make good progress in all areas of learning because of good teaching and a welcoming and stimulating learning environment. Pupils make rapid progress as a result of good teaching and a highly effective curriculum. By the age of seven they meet challenging targets and reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are significantly above average. When they leave the school at the age of nine, many have already reached the levels expected of 11-year-olds. The development of creative writing is particularly impressive. One Year 4 pupil wrote 'dead leaves covered the ground while the rest, wrinkly and browning, just hung by their tips to the old pale trees'. Pupils with learning difficulties are very well supported and make as much progress as the other pupils. Similarly, effective strategies are put in place to support the few pupils learning English as an additional language, which ensure that these pupils also make rapid progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They respond very positively to the school's strong Catholic ethos of care. Pupils' evident enjoyment of school is seen in their enthusiastic attitudes and excellent attendance. They are polite, courteous and confident. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They demonstrate heightened spiritual awareness as they reflect on the issues raised in assembly. They are aware of wider moral issues through their fundraising for charity and discussions in lessons. Pupils respond very well to the school's 'Golden Rules' for behaviour showing a strong sense of right and wrong. Their behaviour is exemplary both in and out of the classroom. They demonstrate a good knowledge of other cultures and show a strong awareness of the cultural diversity within society. Pupils know how to be healthy. They eat nutritious snacks and make healthy choices at lunchtime. They also participate fully in the physical education activities provided by the school during lessons and at lunchtimes. The school has a gold Healthy Schools Award as recognition of its good work in this area. The school council takes its responsibilities to the community seriously. They speak with justified pride of the improvements they have helped to make to the school. Pupils acquire excellent skills in literacy and numeracy preparing them successfully for the next stage in their education. Valuable initiatives such as 'Dads into School Day' help to raise pupils' awareness of the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The teaching is good and effective in ensuring the pupils reach high standards. Basic skills are taught very effectively and teachers enjoy a productive partnership with the highly skilled teaching assistants, who make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, particularly those with learning difficulties. As a result pupils of all abilities achieve extremely well. In particular, teachers are making very effective use of interactive technology to engage and motivate pupils. Where the teaching is particularly successful teachers use questions very effectively to challenge pupils of all abilities and set tasks designed to deepen their understanding. Teachers also make very effective links between subjects. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson in the environmental area pupils drew on their scientific studies on the senses to gather ideas for their story settings. In a few lessons, teachers do not give pupils sufficient time to talk about their ideas and discuss their thinking. In consequence, pupils are not given the opportunity to deepen and demonstrate their understanding. Teachers use a range of assessment strategies effectively to monitor pupil's progress and set challenging targets for improvement. As a result, pupils are well aware of what they need to do to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is highly enjoyable and interesting for pupils and caters effectively for their personal development as well as academic needs. This begins in the Reception class where the curriculum is stimulating and creative. Pupils are given a very effective grounding in the basic skills and creative links are made between subjects to help them develop and practise these skills throughout the curriculum. Pupils learn to be healthy and to stay safe through the school's very effective personal, social and health education programme, science and physical education lessons. The curriculum is greatly enriched by a wide range of activities including the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. Very good use is made of the specialist skills of teaching assistants, for example in Spanish. Pupils participate enthusiastically in the many extra-curricular activities before, during and after school. The curriculum is greatly enhanced by a wide range of interesting visits and visitors to the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Many parents rightly speak highly of the school's exceptional standards of care and support for pupils. It is outstanding. One parent commented 'there is a wonderful sense of community; the atmosphere is caring and respectful.' Child protection procedures and systems for ensuring pupils' health and safety are rigorous and well understood by staff. Any potential risks are assessed carefully. Children settle quickly into the Reception class and other classes because of the school's very good induction procedures. This begins a very fruitful and productive partnership with parents who are fully involved in the life of the school. Pupils feel safe and point to recent improvements to school security such as the school gates. They report that they are very well supervised and feel able to approach adults in school with any problems they might have. The school has highly effective assessment procedures to track pupils' academic progress and also monitors their personal development closely, for example they respond very positively to their behaviour targets. The school consults fully with a range of outside agencies in order to enhance their care for pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher leads the school very successfully and has created an environment which fosters high achievement but is equally committed to pupils' personal development. Underpinning all the school's work is a strong and caring Catholic ethos. The headteacher is extremely well supported by an experienced deputy head and effective leadership team. Governors also play a full and effective part in the life of the school. They give excellent support but are able to hold the school to account through thorough monitoring systems and full involvement in the process of self-evaluation. The school's self evaluation procedures are comprehensive and it seeks relentlessly to improve the already high standards even

further. Evaluations of performance are based firmly on the rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning and performance data. Parents are also consulted on a range of issues related to the improvement of the school. As a result strategies are put in place to address apparent weaknesses. For example, last year the school identified that some boys had not achieved as well as expected in writing in Year 3 and 4. The successful response has been to instigate training on motivation and to deepen staff understanding of the way different children learn. The school has built effectively on its last successful inspection. It has addressed the issue of the Reception class curriculum and made many further improvements. This together with the drive and commitment of school leaders and governors demonstrates that the school is not complacent and has the capacity to get even better.

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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?	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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?	1	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	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	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	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	1	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?	1	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?	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	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

I am writing to thank you all for making us so welcome when we came to the school earlier in the week. We really enjoyed our time at St. Edward's and you helped us by being so friendly and keen to talk to us. We thought you would like to know what we found out.

You are all very proud of your school for good reason. It is an outstanding school. It is a very friendly place to be where you are all very well looked after. All adults in the school help you to be healthy and feel safe. We were very impressed by your behaviour during our two days with you. You really enjoy learning and the many extra things you have to do at lunchtimes and after school. Your school does everything it can to make sure that you do well in your lessons. You get better and better in reading, writing and maths and are doing very well by the time you move on to middle school. This is because the teachers work hard to make lessons fun and interesting. They help you all to do your best. Those of you who find some things a bit more difficult get lots of help from your teachers and teaching assistants to help you do well. One of the main reasons that the school is doing well is because your headteacher leads the school extremely well. She knows you all and with all the staff helping her, works hard to make things better and better for you all.

There are just a couple of things that we have asked the school to do to make things even better. We have asked the teachers to share their ideas to make all lessons really good. We have also asked them to make sure that you have the chance to talk about your ideas in lessons.