



# St Edward's Roman Catholic Primary School, Sheerness

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 118757  
**Local Authority** Kent  
**Inspection number** 291244  
**Inspection dates** 25–26 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Liz Kounnou

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	New Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Sheerness
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		ME12 1BW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01795 662708
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	164	<b>Fax number</b>	01795 667261
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Frank Moran
		<b>Headteacher</b>	M V Melton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 November 2002		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
4–11	25–26 January 2007	291244

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups has increased significantly in recent years to about average. A very small proportion of this group are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties is lower than average. Pupil numbers drop significantly in Years 5 and 6 because a large proportion of pupils transfer to local middle schools at the end of Year 4.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 3**

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils' personal development is good. The Catholic ethos contributes well to their good overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents greatly appreciate this. Pupils enjoy school and behave well. They show good consideration for each other and play and work safely. Pupils eat and drink healthily while at school. The school council, established during the last year, helps pupils to make a satisfactory contribution to the school community.

The quality of education in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and children make steady progress. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, although standards vary from year to year; currently, standards are broadly average, although they are better in English than in mathematics. Since the last inspection, there has been an improvement in the achievement of more able pupils, who now reach the standards expected of them. However, standards are declining at the end of Key Stage 2 because lessons are not always pitched at the right level. Occasionally, for some pupils, the work is too difficult, and for others, it is too easy, and this hampers their progress.

Leadership and management are broadly satisfactory and there is satisfactory capacity to bring about further improvement. This is mainly due to the school's supportive ethos which results in strong teamwork. Currently, the formal systems to check and record how well the school is doing lack rigour and so do not really result in a good rate of improvement. Because there is an over reliance on informal checks on teaching and senior staff do not record their findings carefully, or share them with governors, the governing body does not receive enough information for it to fulfil its duties effectively. However, the informal systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning provide senior staff with a reasonable view of what is working well and what needs to improve. An effective new system for checking how well pupils are doing in each year group has been introduced this year so that teachers know how much progress each pupil is making.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and characterised by good relationships between adults and pupils. Teachers set suitable targets for pupils, but the lack of a consistent system for doing this across the school results in some targets not being at the right level. This results in pupils not always getting work that is meeting their needs. This is compounded by teachers not consistently using information from assessments to plan the next steps in their learning. The school provides a satisfactory level of care and support although, because of the inconsistent use of assessment information, academic guidance is not as tight as it needs to be. The satisfactory curriculum is enriched well with a lot of clubs and other activities that pupils enjoy.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Introduce rigorous systems to check how well the school is doing so that governors are better informed to fulfil their duties effectively.
- Ensure that all pupils know what they need to do to reach the next steps in learning.

- Ensure that lessons provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to work at tasks that are at the right level and will help them to reach their targets.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Almost all pupils make steady progress and attain broadly average standards. English standards have improved since the last inspection, but over the last three years there has been a steady decline in mathematics, because the level of challenge for pupils in mathematics lessons is not always appropriate.

Children start school with levels of attainment that are lower than expected, especially in their language development. They make satisfactory progress in the Reception class, but standards remain below average at the end of the Foundation Stage.

At the end of Year 2, boys' writing standards are particularly low. The school is working to address this by reviewing the writing activities that are provided to try to motivate boys more throughout the school. Recent assessments show that boys currently in Key Stage 2 are now making better progress in their writing and this is contributing to the improved standards in English.

Newly introduced procedures for checking how well pupils are doing are helping staff to identify and tackle weaknesses at an earlier stage. A very small group of older girls are underachieving in mathematics. This was not picked up until the new systems were introduced and has limited the possibilities to help them catch up.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral and social development, is good. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to learn about the diverse cultures in British society. 'The other children are kind,' commented one pupil. Their attendance is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy contributing to the community, and, for example, recently came to school in their pyjamas as part of their efforts to raise money for 'Children in Need'. The new school council has had limited opportunities to date to influence development, but pupils are eager to organise the 'games tuck-shop'.

They have a very good grasp of the importance of healthy lifestyles. As one pupil said, 'It is important to eat fruit to give us energy and so that we do not get fat.' Pupils feel safe in school and are developing a sound grasp of basic skills in preparation for their future lives.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teachers form good relationships with pupils and their parents. Parents particularly appreciate this. One wrote 'Every teacher has always been happy to make time to see me with any concerns.' Pupils enjoy the activities that teachers provide and appreciate the positive comments that teachers write in their books. However, pupils cannot always read these comments and marking does not usually explain why pupils have done well or how they could improve their work. Teaching assistants are well trained and support pupils with learning difficulties well.

Pupils' progress varies because lessons are not always tailored well enough to help pupils of differing abilities to build on their previous skills. For example, some of the more able pupils unnecessarily repeat work in English and mathematics, rather than moving on to work at more challenging activities, while some of those who find the work more difficult try to complete work that they do not fully understand.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Children in the Foundation Stage enjoy the imaginative activities and had great fun dressing up in diving clothes, including flippers and snorkels. They made a 'pirate ship' from large boxes and sailed off on a journey in high spirits. Older, more able pupils receive good support through the 'Brain Academy' where they are challenged to tackle some tricky problems together. However, in lessons, work is not planned carefully enough to take account of the differing abilities, so that there is not enough challenge or support. The curriculum is being reviewed to improve links between subjects, but this has not yet helped to raise standards. Currently, opportunities to apply and extend writing skills are often lacking across the curriculum. There is a good range of extra activities and clubs. A good sports partnership offers pupils the opportunity to learn curling and they were especially proud of the curling medals they were awarded in assembly. Science specialists who visited the school provided an enjoyable experience learning about magnets. 'It was really fun,' said one pupil.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The school does not quite meet current government requirements for safeguarding pupils; however, the necessary administrative systems are almost complete. Routine procedures to protect pupils and ensure their safety are satisfactory, but risk assessments, especially for the premises, are not undertaken frequently enough.

There are weaknesses in the academic guidance given to pupils. Learning targets are often set for the whole class and are not specific enough to provide individual pupils with clear guidance. Consequently, pupils are not familiar with their own targets or

how well they are doing, and this prevents the system from being fully effective in raising standards.

As a small school, pupils are well known to staff and care for vulnerable pupils is good. One parent represented the views of many when she wrote 'Staff have encouraged my son to believe in himself, which has had marvellous results for his self-confidence and motivation.' Staff manage pupils' behaviour well, insisting that pupils reflect on any misbehaviour, and this results in a calm and orderly school.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

There are good partnerships with parents, who overwhelmingly support the school and appreciate the family atmosphere. Teaching and non-teaching staff appreciate the strong sense of teamwork and the guidance they receive to help them improve their practice. The new systems for checking pupils' progress are providing school leaders with information about how well each group of pupils is doing. Senior staff make satisfactory use of this information to bring about improvements in the quality of the curriculum and in teaching and learning, but this has not yet been fully effective in raising standards. The priorities in the school's strategic plan emerged from the informal procedures for checking how well the school is doing. These procedures are no longer underpinned by rigorous systems for gathering and reporting evidence to governors and staff as they were at the last inspection. As a result, governors do not have enough information about how well the school is doing and cannot make an effective contribution to school development. Nonetheless, they are hardworking and supportive. School leaders have successfully tackled a number of weaknesses, but there has not been a concerted effort to halt the decline in pupils' standards. Leadership and management are not quite as effective now as they were at the time of the last inspection.





## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	No
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school. Your school is satisfactory and helps you to make steady progress in your learning. Your teachers and the governors work as a team together, and make suitable arrangements to care for you. Your lessons are satisfactory; the headteacher and other senior teachers are trying to make them even better.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school:

- You behave well and are very polite in lessons and all around the school.
- You told us that you really enjoy many of the activities in lessons and after school.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are good at helping pupils who need extra support.
- You have good relationships with your teachers so that you are happy to come to school and feel safe.

These are the things that we think could be better:

- The governors do not have enough information about the school, and how well each class is doing.
- The learning targets are not helping you to make better progress because some of you have already reached the targets, and quite a lot of you don't know what your targets are.
- Some pupils are asked to do work in lessons that is too difficult for them, and for others the work is too easy.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.