



St Edward's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 122047
Local Authority Northamptonshire
Inspection number 292304
Inspection dates 16–17 January 2007
Reporting inspector Alison Grainger

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Eastleigh Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Kettering
Age range of pupils	4–11		NN15 6PT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01536 481430
Number on roll (school)	215	Fax number	01536 522354
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Marian Tell
		Headteacher	Nicola Vaughn
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Situated on the southern edge of Kettering, the school draws its pupils from a mixture of urban and rural areas. Most pupils are White British. Very few from minority ethnic families are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is a little below average. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Children's attainment on entry is broadly at the level expected, although there are some weaknesses in early literacy skills. The headteacher took over responsibility for the school in November 2005. Two assistant heads were appointed in September 2006. There have been several other changes to the teaching staff in the last two years. There is also a new chair of governors.

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. There are some areas in which it does well. Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Most pupils enjoy school a lot and, for example, value the good and increased range of clubs and activities additional to daily lessons. They form positive relationships and behave well. These strengths in personal development are achieved through the commitment of all staff to ensuring pupils' personal welfare. One parent, echoing the views of many, commented that the school, 'Emphasises children's happiness and wellbeing.' Others say how much they value school's 'family feel'. Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year. As a result of good and recently improved provision, these young children reach standards above those expected by the end of the school year. In the school as a whole, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Although the satisfactory teaching and curriculum support pupils in making an acceptable rate of progress, they do not challenge pupils fully in writing. Too few pupils reach the higher levels for their age, although some are pushed on to achieve these towards the end of their time in the school. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although there have been developments in some areas, the school has not made enough progress since its last inspection. The issues arising from this inspection, which are significant, are largely the same as those identified at the last inspection. Self-evaluation is satisfactory because the new leadership team has a secure understanding of the 'big picture' of the school's effectiveness. The headteacher provides a clear educational direction. Areas of strength and weakness have been acknowledged and the school has started to tackle these. This, alongside the staff's commitment to improving pupils' progress, demonstrates adequate capacity for improvement. However, ongoing monitoring and evaluation are inadequate. And as a result, the pace of change is not accelerating and the provision is not improving sufficiently. The use of assessment to ensure teaching is closely matched to all pupils' needs is underdeveloped. This means that teaching is too often aimed at the middle ability in the class. Pupils are not given enough guidance about how to improve their performance, for example, through targets for them to work towards and feedback in teachers' marking. The shortcomings in academic guidance reduce the overall quality of care, guidance and support for pupils to a satisfactory level. Although the school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory, its performance in monitoring and evaluating, especially of the quality of teaching, is inadequate. Before its next section 5 inspection, Ofsted inspectors may visit the school to monitor the progress that it has made in remedying this weakness. The school would receive two to five days' notice of such a visit.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the monitoring of provision, particularly teaching, focuses on outcomes for pupils and that swift action is taken for improvement.
- Increase pupils' progress in writing and help more to reach the higher levels for their age.
- Use assessment information to match teaching more closely to pupils' needs.

- Ensure pupils are given clear guidance to help them to improve their performance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. In the Reception Year, achievement is good. Almost all children in last year's Reception class reached the goals expected for their age. A good proportion exceeded these goals. Prior to the recent improvements in the Reception Year, children moved into Year 1 with average attainment but still with weaknesses in their literacy skills. Inspection evidence shows that, although progress is satisfactory as pupils move up through Years 1 to 6, the gains in writing are only just acceptable. Results in the end-of-Year 2 national assessments have been close to the national average. However, too few pupils have attained the higher levels for their age, particularly in writing. Test results at the end of Year 6 have been above the national average but standards are lower now. Staffing difficulties in recent years have disrupted the older pupils' progress and contributed to these lower standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children in the Reception Year get off to a flying start in their personal development. They quickly grow in confidence and independence, for example, making their own sandwiches at snack time. Almost all pupils in Years 1 to 6 behave well and are keen to learn. This is especially so in Year 6, where pupils are well motivated, mature and sensible. Pupils' enjoyment of school is evident in their pleasant dispositions and reflected in the above-average attendance rate. Strong spiritual, moral and social development is evident in pupils' positive relationships and their care for others. They make a strong contribution to the school and wider community, for example, by enthusiastically raising funds for charities. Pupils in Year 6 diligently undertake responsibilities as prefects such as looking after the younger ones at lunchtimes. Cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have a reasonable awareness of the importance of healthy eating. Their understanding of safe practices, such as in using tools in practical lessons, is at the level expected. Skills for pupils' future lives, such as in applying the basics of numeracy and the use of computers, develop satisfactorily.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching in the Reception Year is good. It is based on a secure assessment of the next steps children need to make in their learning. There are just a few occasions when the most capable children are not pushed on fully. In Years 1 to 6, teachers are clear about the purpose of lessons and communicate this to pupils. As a result, pupils know why

particular activities are set and settle to them quickly. Warm relationships between teachers and pupils create a climate in which pupils are keen to succeed. Resources and activities are normally well organised. In Year 6, there are good features in the teaching of English and mathematics. The main reason why teaching does not promote better-than-satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6 is that it is not closely enough matched to pupils' differing needs. In particular, teaching in class lessons is not tailored sharply enough to the needs of the most capable pupils or those with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

In the Reception Year, a good range of activities supports learning indoors and outside. The required subjects are covered satisfactorily in Years 1 to 6. Some relevant links are made between subjects, such as through the use of information and communication technology. There are, however, too few opportunities for pupils to write at length and for different purposes in English and in other subjects. As a result, skills in developing and organising ideas in writing are not developed as well as they should be. Satisfactory arrangements are made to support groups who need an extra boost, such as in the lead-up to the national tests. The many activities additional to lessons, such as clubs and sporting activities, contribute significantly to pupils' personal development. Particularly noteworthy are the opportunities for pupils in Years 5 and 6 to go on residential visits. Topic work is enriched well through visits and visitors.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

There are many strengths in the care for pupils' personal welfare. As one parent observed, 'I know when I walk away from the school gates every day that my children are treated with respect and cared for while at school.' Pupils say that they feel safe at school and are sure that they have an adult to whom they can turn should the need arise. Their views are valued formally through the School Council and also informally. Academic guidance is significantly less effective than personal guidance. Pupils benefit from the informal feedback they receive on their work. However, teachers' marking does not do enough to tell pupils what they are doing well and how they can improve their work. There is some good practice in marking in Year 4 on which the school can build. The use of targets to help groups and individuals to make progress is at an early stage and is not consistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership at all levels ensures that the school provides a safe and secure environment in which pupils' personal development is fostered. There is also a commitment from all staff to improving pupils' academic progress. The school knows its main areas for development. However, it succeeds only in maintaining the present provision and not in improving it. Accurate analysis of pupils' performance at the end of each stage helps

in the identification of areas for improvement. It has resulted in good action to improve teaching and the curriculum in the Reception Year. The reason why teaching and the curriculum are not moving on in other years is that routine monitoring and evaluation of provision, particularly of teaching, are inadequate. The school does not, for example, sufficiently analyse how well teaching meets all pupils' needs or promotes progress in writing. The involvement of all staff in decision making is increasing and is satisfactory. Governance has improved recently, with governors having better awareness of their responsibility to provide challenge and help to drive the school forward.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	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	2
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	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

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

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	4
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	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
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 for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you, looking at your work and finding out about your school. You told us that most of you enjoy school a lot. You like your teachers and enjoy the clubs as well as the work you do in lessons. You told us that you feel safe in school and that the pupils and teachers all have respect for each other. You behave well and are keen to learn. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. It makes sure that your personal development is good. The adults look after you well. The Reception children get off to a strong start. They settle in well and become really independent. The teaching and curriculum are satisfactory. As a result, you make reasonable progress as you move up through Years 1 to 6. You reach the standards expected for your age. We have asked the school to help you to do better in writing. All the adults in school want to do their best for you. To help them to achieve this, we have asked them to look more carefully at how well the school helps you to learn. By doing this, they will see what they can do better for you. We have asked the teachers to match the teaching more closely to your abilities. We have also asked them to involve you more in improving your work. To do this, they will give you more information about what you are doing well and what you need to work on most. You can help by continuing to work hard and by always doing your best. Also, keep being the pleasant, friendly young people that you are.