



# St Edward's CofE (A) Middle School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 124458  
**Local Authority** Staffordshire  
**Inspection number** 293004  
**Inspection dates** 28 February –1 March 2007  
**Reporting inspector** David Anstead HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Middle deemed secondary	<b>School address</b>	Westwood Road
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Leek
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	9–11		ST13 8DN
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01538 483218
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	766	<b>Fax number</b>	01538 483227
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Matthew Parker
		<b>Headteacher</b>	John Kime
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 February 2003		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

St Edward's CofE (A) Middle School is a 9 – 13 school of well above average size. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds represent a much lower proportion than the national average. The school sometimes has pupils with English as an additional language but the numbers are very small.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. Its Christian ethos is reflected in the good relationships and care shown for others. Pupils are helped well to develop their self-esteem. They are confident and happy at school. The school has prioritised maintaining its facilities to a high standard and ensuring they are attractively decorated. There are good displays of pupils' art and other work. The facilities are respected and treated well by pupils.

Strong direction is provided by the headteacher and governors. The school took a bold step a few years ago in modifying the Key Stage 3 curriculum to enable all Year 8 pupils to sit the Year 9 national tests a year early. The move is overwhelmingly supported by parents, teachers and pupils. Standards have risen and are now above average with nothing significantly below. Achievement overall is good and is outstanding in mathematics. Pupils make least progress in English. The school's approach has been to make pupils work harder to complete three years' worth of work in just two years. This strategy has generally succeeded but insufficient attention has been paid to other approaches to help pupils progress more quickly. Subject leaders are not sufficiently involved in evaluating how teaching can be improved to help pupils increase their pace of learning. In some subjects pupils have insufficient guidance on how to improve their work.

The curriculum is good with outstanding provision for information and communication technology (ICT). The need to improve careers guidance and provide more opportunities for business and enterprise education is acknowledged by the school. Teaching and learning overall are good but in English they are satisfactory. Where learning is good, pupils are encouraged to work independently and participate in group work and decision making activities. Pupils' basic skills are well developed, which will enable them to enter the next phase of education and, eventually, working life with confidence.

Self-evaluation is satisfactory and enables the school to have an adequate overview of its strengths and weaknesses. The school realised that progress in English until recently was inadequate. Effective action was taken and progress is now satisfactory. However, school improvement planning is only loosely linked to the outcomes of self-evaluation and does not specify precisely enough how the success of new initiatives will be measured. The school has a satisfactory capacity to continue to improve itself.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English by improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- Ensure pupils have guidance on how to improve their work in all subjects.
- Ensure middle leaders evaluate the impact of teachers' work on pupils' learning.
- Use the findings of evaluation work to plan future improvements with precise, measurable outcomes.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Based on tests conducted just before pupils join the school, attainment on entry is below average and weakest in mathematics. The school identifies which pupils are underachieving and provides extra support to help them catch up. Consequently, by the end of Year 6 standards have improved to be broadly average. Pupils make good progress during Key Stage 2.

All pupils sit the national Key Stage 3 tests a year early at the end of Year 8. Test results in mathematics are exceptionally high even though pupils have had three terms less preparation than would be the case for most pupils nationally. Standards in English improved markedly last year. They are broadly average for pupils of Year 8 age although below average for the national tests sat by Year 9 pupils. Overall standards at the end of Year 8 are generally above average with none significantly below.

The school follows national guidance in setting targets based upon pupils' prior attainment. Targets are challenging and particularly so for Years 7 and 8 pupils because they are appropriate for pupils who are a year older. The overall progress made by pupils from Year 5 to Year 8 is good. Progress in mathematics is outstanding.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Pupils speak with confidence and they are willing to express their points of view, both in lessons and in conversations with adults. They respect the views and contributions of others in lessons. The Christian ethos of the school has a positive influence on spiritual and moral development. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school and their parents agree. This is reflected in good attendance. Almost all pupils behave in a very responsible manner in lessons and around the school. Rare incidences of inattentive behaviour are well managed by stimulating teaching and good relationships. The work of the learning mentor in supporting a small number of disaffected pupils is good and well regarded by parents.

Pupils feel safe in the school because the few incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively with the support of older pupils and there is sufficient good, caring adult supervision and support. Pupils are responding well to the Healthy Schools initiative. They make well informed choices at lunchtimes and understand what constitutes a healthy diet. Participation in physical activity is high and sport is popular.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good because teachers have high expectations. Pupils respond well to the challenges set for them and are enthusiastic about their work. Typically, lessons are well planned, there is a productive atmosphere in which pupils feel safe and well supported, and good use of whiteboards and digital projectors adds interest. Pupils say that they appreciate the ways in which many teachers enable them to work together to gain a better understanding of what they have learned. This was demonstrated in a geography lesson where pupils worked cooperatively to name the main features in a landscape brought about by erosion, transportation and deposition. In the best lessons, teachers know how to prompt pupils to think by using skilful questioning. Such a question about 'viewpoint' to a pupil in art and design prompted him to both solve the problem for himself and to articulate his ideas to the rest of the class. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are taught well and make good progress. Teachers are developing opportunities to assess what has been learned, although not all pupils' books contain comments that provide consistently clear advice on how they can improve their work. Methods of checking on pupils' progress at the end of lessons are not always used to good effect.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with outstanding provision for ICT. It is well planned and comprehensive and enables all pupils to make good gains in their learning. Older pupils follow an accelerated programme. This means that pupils in Years 7 and 8 do three year's work in just two years. The features of the middle school system are used effectively to give younger pupils experiences that they might not otherwise have. Year 6 pupils have specialist language teaching and a timetabled chess lesson. More able pupils in Year 8 begin learning Latin. Outside of lessons there is good support for pupils' personal development through the many clubs and visits which pupils enjoy. Visitors add an extra dimension to learning. During the inspection, Year 5 pupils were spellbound when 'Henry VIII' visited the school.

Good links with a local high school help ensure a smooth progression for pupils into the next stage of learning. Joint planning of work from Years 4 to 5 with the local first schools is developing. It is good in mathematics although in some other subjects pupils feel that they repeat some work in Year 5. The school recognises the need to improve pupils' understanding of business and to provide more opportunities for them to develop their enterprise skills.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. The school commits much time and energy to this aspect of the school. The range of adults who work effectively together to safeguard the welfare and well-being of pupils is increasing. Many parents report that staff are committed to supporting their children to make as much progress as possible. A small number of parents, mainly of Year 5 pupils, say that they do not receive sufficient information from the school.

The school's tracking of pupils' progress is effective and provides staff with a clear view of which pupils are underachieving and need help to catch up. Pupils are aware of their targets and the levels they are attaining and this can be seen in the teachers' marking and on the termly reports to parents. However, teachers' assessments of pupils' work are inconsistent and in some subjects pupils have insufficient guidance on how to improve their work. Procedures to identify pupils who are at risk or in need of additional support are effective. Good provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and records show that most make good progress. Teaching assistants provide good support to the pupils they help.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher's bold aspiration for the achievement of pupils by the time they leave the school has been a driving force behind the improvement in standards. His vision for developing the talents of every child is shared by the senior leadership team and by the staff as a whole. Teachers speak of a 'common sense of purpose', but also of a 'genuine care for the well-being of all staff' shown by the headteacher. Governors are well informed and have a good understanding of strengths and areas for development. They ask searching questions, are ambitious for the future of the school and are having a direct impact on raising standards.

Systems for monitoring the quality of the teaching and learning are satisfactory but there is insufficient analysis of the impact of teachers' work on pupils' learning. Self-evaluation is satisfactory but not yet sufficiently rigorous to determine whether the outcomes of initiatives are good enough. Findings are not always directly linked to the school's plans for improvement, many of which are too imprecise about the changes they are designed to bring about in pupils' learning. The contribution that subject leaders make to these aspects of the school's work is unsatisfactory. Action points from the last inspection have been tackled well. Staffing and resources for learning are good. The school gives good value for money. The strong commitment to raising achievement by the staff, governing body and the senior team indicates that there is adequate capacity for further improvement.

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## 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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	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	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### 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	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

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

<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	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

Following our visit to inspect your school, I am writing to tell you about our findings. I would like to thank those of you we spoke to for the friendly welcome you gave us. Your responses to our questions helped us decide what is good about your school and what needs to be improved. The education you receive at your school is good.

These are the strengths of your school.

- You work hard and so achieve good results in the national tests.
- The progress you make in mathematics is outstanding.
- The teaching you receive is good.
- You enjoy school because relationships are good and it is a happy place to be.
- The school cares for you well.

There are some aspects of the school's work which we think can be better. Teachers do not watch each other teach enough to be able to help each other improve. The school does not plan in enough detail how it is going to improve. I have asked your headteacher to help you learn more by improving some of the teaching even further and by making sure you have enough guidance on what you need to do to improve your work. You can help by following the guidance you are given.

I wish you every success in the future.