



Saint Edmund's Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 126478
Local Authority Wiltshire
Inspection number 293568
Inspection date 5 December 2006
Reporting inspector David Clegg

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Duncan Street
School category	Community		Calne
Age range of pupils	4-11		SN11 9BX
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01249 813821
Number on roll (school)	192	Fax number	01249 822127
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	William Simms
		Headteacher	Paul Blake
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is of average size. Pupils come from a wide area, and a higher than usual number move to the school during their primary education. A below average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. When children enter the school in Reception, they have a range of skills broadly in line with those usually found.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

There are two daily events that encapsulate why this is a good school and why some aspects of its work are outstanding.

School officially starts at 9.15, but from about 8.40 onwards, pupils, many of whom are accompanied by parents or grandparents, arrive into school, sit down in their classrooms and start to work together on activities, such as mathematics puzzles, that have been prepared by the teacher. Later, they make their way to the hall for the regular 'wake and shake' that gets the blood flowing and the body ready for action. If they wish, they can all enjoy a freshly prepared breakfast. By 9.15, parents have quietly departed and lessons have begun. The second event is lunchtime. The school lunch is prepared on the premises with locally sourced ingredients. Pupils sit in small mixed aged groups accompanied by an adult. The food is served out at the tables so that lunchtime is a genuinely social gathering where conversation flows between children and adults. It is an occasion to savour and look forward to. It is little wonder that pupils have a good idea about what to do to stay healthy!

It is this palpable sense of community that gives the school its strength. It underpins the good levels of achievement and the sense of enjoyment that pervades the school. These two features are evident right from the start in the Reception Class so that when children start Year 1, they are already well on the way to success. This good start is built on well so that by the time pupils leave, standards in English, mathematics and science are above, and often well above, the average. Standards in writing are high, but not quite as high as in reading. The outstanding personal development of pupils ensures that they are all fully able to take advantage of the good teaching and the outstanding curriculum that provides a rich and broad range of experiences and opportunities. Pupils enjoy learning. They say their lessons are both challenging and fun. They thrive as a result of good care and guidance that not only makes sure that they feel safe and secure but also that they have a good idea of their own progress. Pupils take their targets very seriously and say they help them to strive harder. As one pupil remarked, having the targets 'helps you to push towards them'. Pupils are ambitious and entirely confident that the school is helping them to do their best.

Good, consistent and sustained leadership has forged a strong sense of teamwork and camaraderie around an ethos of high expectations and the determination that all will succeed. Nowhere is this more evident than in the way in which pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are fully included and helped to succeed just like everyone else. There are well-established systems to make sure that the school is kept on track. These include regular checks on teaching and the good use of performance data by everyone, including class teachers, to help to plan work and identify where extra help might be needed. This is another reason why pupils with learning difficulties do equally well as other pupils.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards in writing, so that they are closer to the standards in reading.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and reach above, and sometimes well above, average standards. Good standards are evident throughout the school. They are particularly high in reading and mathematics, with well over half of pupils reaching above average levels by the time they leave. Standards in writing are also high, but not quite as high as those in reading and mathematics. Spelling is a weakness, with too many pupils not being absolutely secure of the spelling of common words.

High standards are also evident in other subjects. The quality and range of artwork is better than is often found. Because pupils are given good opportunities to apply skills learned in one subject in another, there are high standards in design and technology, history and geography. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are well up to the expected standards, with pupils using computers to help them learn about history and geography and to produce artwork. Alongside the up-to-date technologies, the school also teaches the older art of bookmaking that adds to the quality of individually produced topic work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are remarkably well prepared for the next stage of their education. The great majority of them have skills and attributes that will stand them in good stead in the future. Their behaviour is exemplary. They are keen and eager to learn and really enjoy what the school offers, hence their attendance is good. Pupils are confident and articulate, feel safe and secure and have high aspirations. Very strong spiritual and cultural development gives pupils an early appreciation of, for instance, the relationship between art and religion through working with local artists to illustrate the Creation story. They have a very firm understanding of right and wrong and are very happy to reach out to help others through supporting charities both at home and overseas. The school has successfully incorporated a multicultural dimension to its work following the last inspection.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons move on at a good pace, with both teachers and pupils having a clear understanding of what the lesson is about. Good use is made of the interactive whiteboards to illustrate and reinforce clear instructions. The work given to pupils is matched well to their needs, and those who might need extra support are successfully helped by teaching assistants. Year 6 pupils are very clear that the work they are given challenges them.

Occasionally, not everything is done to help pupils to develop accurate spelling. For example, key words or new vocabulary are not displayed as prominently as they could be and this results in pupils making unnecessary mistakes that have to be corrected later rather than written work being accurate from the start. Nevertheless, underpinning the effective teaching are strong and constructive relationships at all levels and the determination, shared by pupils and teachers, that everyone should work hard and achieve their best.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

A major reason why pupils enjoy school so much is the richness of the curriculum and the good range of opportunities on offer. The richness is evident throughout the school. The links made between subjects help to bring learning to life and give pupils a real sense of achievement. As one commented, 'It boosts your confidence for secondary school'. Art and religious education are brought together, design and technology is linked to art and history, and music and geography are brought together as pupils write and produce a 'Recycling Rap'.

The breadth and wholeness of the curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. The school places a great emphasis on teaching pupils how to live as well as how to learn.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school keeps a very sharp eye on its pupils. They are known very well, both in personal and academic terms. The procedures for keeping pupils safe and ensuring their well-being are secure and a key reason why pupils themselves feel very comfortable and well looked after. They have a great deal of confidence in the adults and have no hesitation in seeking their help and advice. One pupil spoke for many when he said 'You are surrounded by people who care for you'. There is a high level of care and support given to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and this makes sure that all pupils thrive.

Pupils are given good guidance about how well they are doing. They have clear targets, which they feel help them. Marking is very good, with plenty of helpful guidance about what to do to improve next time. The pupils' assessment of each other's work is very beneficial in giving all pupils insights into their own learning and progress. The school's recent implementation of more formal termly assessments will only strengthen what is already a good set of procedures.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school benefits from sustained and committed leadership that seeks constant improvement. The improvement is driven by a very keen awareness of how well pupils

are doing and identifying ways in which better provision might provide better outcomes. The school knows itself very well. There are effective and well managed checks on teaching that lead to improvements. The good use of performance data ensures that achievement remains at the heart of the school's improvement agenda. The plans to refine this further are securely based on the need for even more precise information about progress over the medium term so that any necessary adjustments to provision can be made. Action is taken quickly to address any underachievement to make sure pupils do not fall behind. The school takes full account of the views of parents in how it develops and is increasingly intent upon giving pupils more opportunities to contribute to school life through the introduction of a school council, following the setting up of class councils.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1

The quality of provision

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

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	1
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

Thanks to all of you for making my recent visit to your school such a pleasant day. I appreciated the help given to me by those pupils who came to have a chat with me and to those who looked after me at lunchtime. I am writing to let you know what I thought about your school. As many of you told me, yours is a good school.

There are many good things about your school. You are all well looked after and well taught and this helps you to do well in your lessons and also to grow up knowing how to behave and be responsible. You feel safe and secure and I know many of you told me how much you like everyone who works in the school. The school provides lots of interesting and fun things to do and it is a good thing that you are all so enthusiastic about joining in everything. I especially like the way the school starts each morning so that you can do interesting things straightaway or join in the 'wake and shake' session.

Because your lessons are well planned and your teachers do a good job, all of you do well and many of you reach high standards, especially in reading and mathematics. Your written work is often good as well, but I have asked the school just to do a little more to try to make sure that you get better at spelling, especially with those words that you use most often or are part of a new topic that you are studying.

Once again thank you for your help. I do hope that you have a good end of term. I know many of you are already looking forward to the Christmas lunch!