

St Edward's C of E Comprehensive School, Language College and Sixth Form Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102349
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	307979
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Michael Lynes HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	1288
6th form	224
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Stephen Waine
Headteacher	Mr Giles Drew
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2005
School address	London Road Romford RM7 9NX
Telephone number	01708 730462
Fax number	01708 731485

Age group	11-18
Inspection dates	12–13 March 2008
Inspection number	307979

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector over a two day period. Inspectors investigated the following issues: achievement and standards, leadership and management, teaching and learning, aspects of personal development and well-being, care, guidance and support, and the sixth form. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation (SEF) national published assessment data, the school's own records and other documentation, and observation of the school at work. Parents' questionnaires, interviews with senior staff, and students also informed inspectors' judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments in these areas, as given in the SEF, were other than justified.

Description of the school

St Edward's is a larger than average, popular secondary that attracts students from a wide area as it is the only Church of England comprehensive in the locality. The majority of students are of White British origin; about a fifth are either of Black Caribbean or Black African heritage. Very few students speak English as an additional language. The number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about half of that found typically, and about four fifths of these students have moderate learning difficulties. The number with a statement of educational need is about average. The school has specialised in languages since 2005. It also holds the International Schools award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Edward's is a good school with some outstanding aspects, but also some satisfactory ones. The school prides itself on a strong Christian ethos. This manifests itself in the good care and support that many of the most vulnerable students receive and in the outstanding partnership work with external agencies and parents. It is an inclusive school that strives to do its best for the wide range of social and emotional needs that some students present. Many staff work tirelessly, in partnership with external agencies and families, to remove barriers to students' academic success and personal development. As a result permanent exclusions are rare. The mathematics department is very well led and results are consistently outstanding. The sixth form is good and improving and students are highly appreciative of all that it has to offer, and in turn take a full part in contributing to the life of the school. Consequently, their personal development and well-being is outstanding. However, the ability of teachers to manage the challenging behaviour of some students in Years 7 to 11 is variable and this impacts on the quality of learning in some lessons.

The long serving, dedicated headteacher has successfully sustained a real sense of community that engenders a deep spirit of caring not only for one another, but also across the local and global communities that students are involved with. He has successfully developed a very able team of senior leaders who are highly committed to the students. They are open, honest and accurately diagnose the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The senior leadership team has acted effectively to address the dip in both standards and achievement at Key Stage 4 in 2007. As a result, progress has improved and standards appear to be rising. The development plan sets out a sensible direction for the school but does not have a sharp enough focus on raising standards or improving the quality of teaching. The governing body is supportive, carries out its statutory duties well and ensures that the school is financially stable. However, governors do not offer the senior leadership team sufficient challenge on academic achievement.

The quality of middle leadership is good and improving. Achievement in mathematics is consistently high throughout the school. The head of science has identified the reasons for lower achievement at Key Stage 4 last year and has taken action to ensure that progress has improved. Beginning and newly qualified teachers are very well monitored and supported by the professional tutor, and their development is good. However, because senior leaders do not rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and learning they are not able to accurately identify and share good practice or to quickly spot emerging weaknesses.

Students begin school with academic standards that are above average, and by the end of Key Stage 3 they consistently reach standards that are exceptionally high. They make good progress in English, and outstanding progress in mathematics and science. They do not make as much progress in Key Stage 4, but standards are still above average. Achievement continues to be outstanding in mathematics, is good in English, but was only satisfactory in science in 2007. Achievement in the school's language specialism was satisfactory. This represents good progress overall. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers because of the high quality support that they receive.

Achievement is good because the quality of teaching and learning is good. It is best at Key Stage 3 and in the sixth form. Teaching is more variable at Key Stage 4; students report that they would like to be more involved in lessons by having greater opportunities to work independently or in groups. The quality of learning is affected in some lessons by low level

disruption. This is because some teachers are better at planning for, and managing, challenging behaviour than others. The curriculum is broad and offers students a good range of options at the end of Year 9. The school is working to extend the range of vocational courses, and has consulted students in choosing which 14–19 diplomas to offer.

Although the school sets suitably challenging targets for student achievement not all students know their individual targets and how to achieve them. The school did not meet the targets it set for examination results in the specialist subjects last year but provided convincing evidence that it will meet the realistic ones it has set for this year. All students are entered for a GCSE in a modern foreign language and both progress and participation in Spanish is good and improving. The schools' outreach work to develop languages in local primary schools is extensive, and specialist status has offered students many additional enrichment opportunities. However, specialist status has not improved standards either in languages or across the school.

Students develop into confident, articulate young people, particularly in the sixth form. They feel safe, well cared for and appreciate the good range of support and advice. Their contribution to the school, local and global communities is outstanding and specialist status has played an important part in developing this. They raise impressive amounts of money for charity and are enthusiastically engaged in a wide range of initiatives. They are generally respectful and courteous. Their attendance has declined since 2005, when it was well above the national average. Although the school monitors it rigorously, it is aware it could take more rapid and robust action to improve it. Procedures for safeguarding students are comprehensive and regularly reviewed.

A high number of responses were received to the confidential parental questionnaire. Parents are very supportive of the school. However, a significant minority had concerns about behaviour in some lessons, a view with which inspectors agree. A number of parents also felt that the school could do more to listen to the views of students, but inspectors found no evidence to support this.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The sixth form is good and improving. Students are very positive about their experiences, as one said, 'We have a really excellent community spirit...and teachers really motivate us and focus on our learning.' Although there is some variation in achievement it is good overall and there has been a steady trend of improvement since the last inspection. Achievement is at least good in geography, history, mathematics, music and physics. Students underachieve in information and communication technology, French, German, psychology and sociology. The curriculum is broad and has been adapted in response to students' requests and needs. Students who join in Year 12 integrate very well. They are confident they will be given the help they need and that their progress will be closely monitored. Students are keen to learn and contribute extremely well to both the life of the school and the local and global communities. The sixth form is very well led and student progress is rigorously monitored and based on high expectations.

What the school should do to improve further

- More rigorously and consistently monitor the quality of teaching to ensure that best practice is shared and emerging weaknesses are quickly dealt with.
- Plan for more lessons that will engage and match the needs of more students, particularly at Key Stage 4, so that behaviour improves.

- Take more robust measures to improve attendance.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall	16-19
---	----------------	-------

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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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?	2	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	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	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 March 2008

Dear Students

Inspection of St Edward's C of E Comprehensive School, Language College and Sixth Form Centre, Romford, RM7 9NX

It was a real pleasure to meet some of you when we recently inspected your school. We were impressed by your honesty and commitment. I am writing to summarise what we found, but if you want to read the full report you can download it from www.ofsted.gov.uk.

We judged your school to be good with some outstanding features, but with some satisfactory features that require improvement. We were particularly struck by the way the school cares for you, especially those of you who need additional help and support to ensure that you succeed. Your examination results are generally good, particularly in Year 9 and in the sixth form. The results in mathematics are consistently excellent. We were also impressed by the outstanding ways in which you contribute to both the school and your wider community.

There are some areas that the school needs to work on to improve it even further:

- check the quality of lessons more regularly to share the best ideas and deal with any problems
- plan more interesting lessons where you are actively involved, particularly in Years 10 and 11, so that behaviour improves
- take greater action to improve your attendance.

Clearly you can do your part by coming to school more regularly and making a real effort to behave in all of your lessons, as by doing both you will achieve even more.

I wish you all the best for your future, especially those of you about to take examinations.

Yours sincerely

Michael Lynes

Her Majesty's Inspector