

# St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103440
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	308320
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mark Mumby 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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	172
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Margaret Dance
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mary O'Friel
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 November 2005
<b>School address</b>	Rosebery Street Springhill Birmingham B18 7PA
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 5237274
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 5152521

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one Additional Inspector. When the school was inspected in November 2005, it was judged to require special measures because it failed to give the pupils an acceptable standard of education. Since November 2005, the school has been monitored on a regular basis by HMI.

## Description of the school

St Edmund's is an average sized primary school with a nursery. It serves a disadvantaged area in central Birmingham. Approximately a third of the pupils are of White British background and another third are of Caribbean background, the remainder being from a wide range of other minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who do not speak English as their first language is similar to that found nationally. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than that found nationally. When children start school, the majority of them have skills and understanding below that expected for their age.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The school now provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. There have been significant improvements since the last inspection. Teaching is now satisfactory and many lessons are good. As a result, most pupils are now making at least satisfactory progress. The gaps in pupils' learning brought about by the legacy of inadequate teaching identified in November 2005 are closing. These improvements are the direct result of the strong leadership of the recently appointed headteacher who has provided a clear sense of educational direction for the school. Along with her deputy, she has established an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Sensible actions to address weaknesses have been effective in bringing about rapid recent improvements. However, the school is too dependent on this small team and the contribution made by other senior leaders in the school is insufficiently developed.

Children have a good start in the Foundation Stage because every effort is made to help 'their little light shine'. They make good progress in Nursery and Reception. By the time pupils leave the school, they achieve standards in English and mathematics similar to the national average. Standards attained in science by Year 6 pupils in national tests in 2007 were exceptionally low. The school has recognised the causes of this underachievement and has put in place appropriate strategies to bring about improvements. As a result, the majority of pupils are now making satisfactory or better progress in science and the gaps in their skills of scientific investigation are beginning to close. This is a good example of the school's sound capacity to improve further.

Recent improvements to the curriculum, such as the focus on investigative skills in science, additional swimming lessons, and outstanding music lessons in Year 4, all contribute to the pupils' high levels of enjoyment. Their behaviour in lessons is good and sometimes exemplary. The strong Catholic ethos contributes to pupils' excellent spiritual development alongside good moral, social and cultural skills. Pupils understand the benefits of making healthy choices in respect of diet and exercise. Opportunities for older pupils to undertake responsibly through being, for example, members of the school council, house captains or prefects enable them to make a positive contribution to the school.

This is a caring school where pupils feel valued and safe. The school has implemented a system for setting targets to help pupils improve their work and this is beginning to have an impact. However, teachers' marking does not consistently provide sufficient guidance to help pupils improve their work and meet their targets.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

A high level of care helps children to settle in to the Nursery and Reception classes. Routines are quickly established, children feel secure, and there is a happy atmosphere. Staff provide a stimulating range of learning opportunities that encourage children to make choices and develop their independent learning skills. Good use is made of the new interactive whiteboard in Reception. Children show great enjoyment in their learning, working and playing together well because their personal and social skills are given a high priority.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the amount of good and better teaching to enable all pupils to make as much progress as they can and to raise standards further.
- Make more consistent use of marking and target setting to enable pupils to make more rapid progress in their learning.
- Ensure that leadership responsibilities are appropriately shared throughout the staff team in order to manage school improvement more effectively.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

When children start school in either Nursery or Reception, their skills are generally below those expected for their age, particularly in their knowledge and understanding of the world. The majority of children make good progress through the Foundation Stage and most children reach standards close to those expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.

Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout Key Stage 1 in reading and writing and the majority of pupils reach standards similar to national averages in national assessments at the end of Year 2. Although the standards pupils attained in mathematics in 2006 and 2007 were exceptionally low, work in lessons and pupils' books indicates that pupils are now making satisfactory progress. However, many pupils in Years 1 and 2 still have significant gaps in their learning, particularly in mathematics and writing.

The progress made by pupils in English and mathematics throughout Key Stage 2 has improved since the last inspection and is now satisfactory with the majority of pupils attaining standards similar to national averages by the end of Year 6. However, progress in science deteriorated to an unsatisfactory level and the standards reached in the 2007 national assessments for Year 6 pupils were exceptionally low. The school has recently put in place sensible plans to address this underachievement and there are already signs that these are having a significant impact on improving pupils' progress throughout the school.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils are polite and friendly around school and behave well in lessons. However, at playtimes, many pupils become too boisterous when they become engrossed in their games. In spite of this, they say that they feel safe, there is always someone who will listen to them, and the rare incidents of bullying or racial harassment are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils are respectful and thoughtful during collective worship, singing sweetly and harmoniously. The school council provides a good opportunity for pupils to influence the life of the school. It has been responsible for a variety of important changes, such as the introduction of play equipment at playtimes and the anti-bullying posters around the school. Although they understand about healthy lifestyles, pupils do not always make the most healthy choices at lunchtime.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Most lessons are well planned and teachers ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn. Frequent references to these expectations help to keep pupils motivated and contribute to their positive attitudes to learning. Teachers use their good knowledge of the pupils in their class to plan interesting activities which suitably challenge most of them. However, on occasions, planned activities are too difficult for some pupils or are not hard enough for the most able pupils. Teachers ask appropriate questions and monitor the pupils' work carefully. When necessary, they make sensible changes to plans as lessons progress. As a result, pupils enjoy their work and the majority of them make satisfactory progress with a significant proportion making good progress. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support individuals and groups of pupils.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is appropriately planned to meet the pupils' needs. Recent improvements to the science curriculum ensure that pupils now have suitable opportunities to develop their investigative skills. As a result, science lessons are interesting and pupils make satisfactory or better progress. Good links are made between different subjects. For example, work observed in a mathematics lesson was used to develop learning in science. The opportunity for all pupils to learn to play the cello or violin in Year 4 is a particular strength. Pupils in this year group participate with great enthusiasm and make exceptional progress. The opportunities for all pupils in Key Stage 2 to go swimming, and the increased number of visits to places of interest, enrich the pupils' learning experiences and are very popular.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

This is a caring school which gives high priority to pupils' welfare and safety. Staff, governors and the school council are well aware of health and safety issues. There are appropriate procedures for child protection and for assessing and dealing with risks. Pupils, including those who are more vulnerable, feel secure.

The school has put in place appropriate systems for marking work and setting targets for improvement. However, these are not used consistently throughout the school. As a result, pupils are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have clear and helpful plans which are used effectively to help them make better progress.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 3

The headteacher has very effectively shared her high expectations to achieve the best outcomes for all of the pupils with her staff team. Improvement work is planned sensibly to address the most important issues. Consequently, the school has successfully addressed the significant

shortcomings in teaching and the curriculum, enabling the majority of pupils to make satisfactory or better progress in their learning. These activities are well documented and provide the governing body and leadership team with a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, the school is too dependent on the headteacher and her deputy. The contribution to whole school development made by other senior and middle leaders is too small.

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## Annex A

## 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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

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

<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.

## Annex A

**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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

25 January 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St Edmund's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham B18 7PA

Thank you for making Mrs Robertson and me so welcome when we visited your school. I have now visited your school six times and I have seen a lot of improvements.

Your lessons are now much better than they used to be so you all learn more quickly. This is because your teachers know you all very well and they make sure that they plan activities that are interesting and make you think. The extra swimming lessons, trips out, and the music lessons in Year 4 are all good ideas which help to make your learning more fun. We have asked your teachers to try to make your lessons even better still, and to give you more ideas about how to improve when they mark your work.

You behave well in lessons and try hard with your work. In some lessons, your behaviour was excellent – many of you were very thoughtful during your worship at the start of the day. When you are in the playground you don't behave quite as well. Some of you need to be a little calmer and think more about those children who want to play quietly. The adults in school take good care of you and many of you help with this by doing jobs or being on the school council – well done. Have you noticed how much cleaner your school is? That's because your new caretaker is doing such a good job, don't forget to thank him! You could help to take even more care of yourselves by thinking carefully about making healthy eating choices at lunchtime.

Your new headteacher has made sure that your school has got better quickly, but she has had to work very hard. Although other adults have helped, we have asked Mrs O'Friel to share out some of the big jobs with the other teachers in school. That will help your school get even better more quickly.

Please keep up all the good work and enjoy your time at school. Good luck!

Yours sincerely

Mark Mumby Her Majesty's Inspector

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Yours sincerely

Mark Mumby  
Her Majesty's Inspector