

The CofE School of St Edmund and St John

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103852
Local Authority	Dudley
Inspection number	308438
Inspection dates	7–8 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary McGreggan
Headteacher	Philip Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2004
School address	Beechwood Road Dudley DY2 7QA
Telephone number	01384 816715
Fax number	01384 816716

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and a third of pupils are of Pakistani heritage who are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the national average as is the number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils entering or leaving the school during the school year is high, especially in Years 3 to 6. Up until very recently, the school has faced many issues in raising standards, largely due to staffing issues.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. Its main strength lies in the good quality of pastoral care that it provides in helping pupils to be confident and develop self-esteem. Pupils are very fond of their teachers and say that they are treated fairly. One member of the school council, speaking for many, said, 'They educate us well here; they keep helping you until you get it.'

In the national tests in 2007, results were extremely low, especially in mathematics, and pupils' achievement was unsatisfactory. Many factors contributed to pupils' underachievement including staffing issues, high levels of pupils entering or leaving the school at different times of the school year, and very low attainment on entry to the school. The new leadership team has managed to arrest underachievement and raise standards, thereby showing satisfactory capacity for further improvement. Standards are now below average and pupils' progress is satisfactory. Pupils' achievement in reading is good and pupils attain average standards. Pupils are on track to reach challenging targets this year, and pupils' achievement in mathematics has greatly improved. Improvement is still needed in writing, using and applying mathematics and experimental and investigative science.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good as is children's achievement. On entry to Year 1, children attain the expected standards in personal, social and emotional development, physical development, creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world but do not attain the expected levels in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development in spite of good progress, because of their low starting points.

All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress, but their rates of progress are inconsistent. This is because teaching, although satisfactory, is variable. Not all teachers use assessment information, including targets on pupils' individual education plans, sufficiently well to move pupils on in their learning, especially in Years 1 and 5.

Care, guidance and support are good. Parents say their children are very happy in school. Staff have worked relentlessly at improving attendance which is now satisfactory. Coupled with good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the outcomes for pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, they behave well and take their responsibilities seriously. Pupils know about healthy eating and staying safe. They contribute to the wide community by fund raising for charities and participating in church events.

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enhanced with a good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils' preparation for their future education and the later world of work is satisfactory. Their ability to work in teams and contribute to group work is good. However, they do not have enough opportunities to develop and consolidate their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects.

Leadership and management are satisfactory but subject leaders have not had sufficient opportunities to lead their subjects. School self-evaluation is accurate. Governance is satisfactory but the large number of priorities identified in the school improvement plan prevent governors from rigorously monitoring the work of the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Good teaching, the learning of basic skills of literacy and numeracy through play, and the availability of good quality resources contribute to children's good achievement. Children enter the Reception Year with well below average standards in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. They make good progress in all areas of learning and attain standards that are below those expected nationally in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development but children attain the expected standards in other areas of learning. Children learn in a safe and exciting environment with good quality provision for outdoor play.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' rates of progress, especially in Year 1 and Year 5, by ensuring that information from assessment is used to plan tasks to meet the needs of all groups of pupils and that individual educational plans are used in lessons.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in a range of subjects and to undertake more experimental and investigative work in science.
- Develop the role of subject leaders to enable them to raise standards more effectively.
- Improve the quality of the school improvement plan by reducing the number of priorities and ensure that the governing body monitors the implementation of the improvement plan effectively.

A small proportion of 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

Over the last four years, pupils have not made sufficient progress and standards overall have been exceptionally low in English, mathematics and science. However, the recently introduced systems of rigorous tracking, good assessment procedures and improved teaching have successfully put pupils on course to attain their targets. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory overall and standards in English, mathematics and science are below average. The school's internal data and monitoring show that standards are affected by the high levels (approximately 50%) of pupils entering or leaving the school, especially in Year 6. Pupils in Year 6 who have been at the school since Reception have made satisfactory progress in the time they have been in school. Writing, using and applying mathematics, and experimental and investigative science are the weakest aspects of pupils' work. Good progress is now made in reading and pupils are attaining average standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, more able pupils and those learning English as an additional language are now making satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils know about the relentless efforts of black people such as Mary Seacole, to help fight social injustice and, through their participation in many creative arts projects such as the Identity Project with the local secondary school, they develop a strong

sense of who they are in today's multicultural society. The school is a well ordered community in which pupils behave well and respect one another's differences. Pupils have good attitudes to learning, collaborate and play well together but, at present, too few opportunities are provided for them to be independent learners. Attendance is improving and is satisfactory. Pupils know how to look after themselves, stay safe, eat healthily and consider those less fortunate than themselves by fund raising in the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but variable. The best rates of progress are made in Reception, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 6 where teaching is good. Teaching in this school is characterised by the very good relationships staff have with pupils. The quality of marking throughout the school is good. Teachers now provide clear comments to help pupils overcome their learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The vast majority of pupils know their targets and this is having a positive impact on learning. Teachers give pupils very clear guidance on what and how they are going to learn and this keeps pupils focused in lessons. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and help those pupils who find learning difficult. However, too few opportunities are provided for pupils to assess their own work and, on occasions, teachers provide too many opportunities for speaking and listening at the expense of developing writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum covers all the main requirements of the National Curriculum, but opportunities for using and applying mathematics and for experimental and investigative science are underdeveloped. Teachers' planning does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to practise in other subjects what they have learnt in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Staff give generously of their time to provide a good range of extra-curricular activities and these enhance pupils' achievement and enjoyment of school. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and provides an appropriate balance of learning through play and undertaking aspects of more formal work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are good. The school cares well for its pupils, and parents appreciate the support given to families by the learning mentor and the family link worker. There are good links with external agencies, especially social services, educational psychologists and local secondary schools. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are good and staff have participated in recent child protection training. Children settle into the Foundation Stage well due to good induction procedures which are much appreciated by parents. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress are good and any aspect of underachievement is quickly rectified.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher and deputy headteacher lead the school adequately. They know the strengths of the school and the areas for development and have put effective systems of accountability in place to raise standards. This is seen in the recent good progress in reading and satisfactory progress in mathematics. The school sets itself challenging targets which it is very likely to achieve this year. The determination to improve the quality of provision within the school is seen in the good teamwork of all staff. The school improvement plan has too many priorities and initiatives for improvement. This results in the governing body having difficulty in evaluating the cost effectiveness of their spending decisions. Subject leaders are not yet fully involved in raising standards and monitoring effectiveness, an area which the school has already identified as needing improvement.

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 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 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	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?	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?	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

9 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The CoFE School of St Edmund and St John, Dudley, DY2 7QA

Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for telling us about your life in school. Your school is satisfactory, although we agree with you that learning is improving and that your teachers are good fun to be with. We were particularly impressed with the good progress made by those of you in Reception, especially in phonics and counting. Staff look after you well and you have very good relationships with them. Your classroom displays are full of lovely artwork. We were particularly impressed with the work you did when you went to your local secondary school.

Academic standards are improving, although they are still below those in most schools, and you are making satisfactory progress. You are making good progress in reading and it is nice to see so many of you using the library. You really enjoy the good range of out of school clubs. You behave well, have good attitudes to learning and you know about healthy eating and keeping yourselves safe. You take your responsibilities seriously and the playground leaders do a good job during break times. The teaching in your school is satisfactory and teachers give you good pointers for improvement. Your headteacher and deputy headteacher manage the school adequately and all staff prepare you appropriately for secondary school.

We have given your headteacher and staff some pointers for improvement to help you make even better progress. We have asked your teachers to use information from assessment to help you overcome some sticking points in learning. We have asked them to plan more activities which will enable you to use your skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT in different subjects and to give you more opportunities to do practical mathematics and set up more experiments in science. We have also suggested that teachers in charge of subjects help you make even better progress. The leadership team has been asked to make your school development planning easier for your governors to follow so that they can see how well you are all doing.

Please thank your parents for seeing us and sending in the questionnaires telling us about their views on the school.

We wish you all success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Bogusia Matusiak-Varley Lead inspector

9 May 2008



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Lead inspector