

St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125216
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315198
Inspection date	2 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Beryl Richmond

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	207
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	30
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Colin Cox
Headteacher	Mrs Teresa Bullen
Date of previous school inspection	20 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Drive Godalming GU7 1PF
Telephone number	01483 414 497

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	2 October 2008
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Fax number

01483 414 497

Age group 4-11

Inspection date 2 October 2008

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Introduction

This was a reduced tariff inspection carried out by two Additional Inspectors. They evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- The strategies used by the school to improve the proportion of pupils achieving at the higher levels in reading by the end of Year 6, and how well pupils' achievement and standards in writing are improving.
- The quality and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- How well pupils are developing as independent learners.

Evidence was gathered from the school's own assessment data and other school documentation, observations of teaching and learning, looking at pupils' work in books, looking at the way that pupils interact with each other and adults and their response to what is provided for them, parents' questionnaires and discussions with staff.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail. The inspectors found that the judgements made in the school's self-evaluation form were justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

St. Edmund's is a small, oversubscribed school. It makes provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in a full-time Reception class. Most pupils are from Catholic families of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, or who are learning English as an additional language, are below average. Very few pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. Their needs include dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties, communication, speech, emotional and behavioural needs and hearing impairment. More pupils than is usual join or leave the school other than at the normal time, particularly in Key Stage 2.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St. Edmund's is a good school. The headteacher's excellent leadership and management, supported well by the staff team and governors, have led to major improvement since the last inspection. For example, academic guidance is now excellent and other points for improvement identified have been addressed successfully. The provision for, and achievement of children in EYFS have improved well. Excellent care, guidance and support are helping pupils to develop exceptionally well personally, and to achieve well academically. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 6. Attendance improved from below average in 2005 and has been consistently good from 2006 onwards. Pupils' behaviour and their enjoyment of school are excellent. Some of their comments were, 'One of the best schools - loads of people say how smart we are', 'Children really get along with each other' and 'Teachers care'. The school evaluates itself very accurately, is not complacent and knows what needs to be done to ensure continued improvement. Responsibility for school improvement is widely shared. The great success of actions taken by the leadership team show that the school has excellent potential to make further improvements. Most parents value the school's work and the school values their opinions that it gains from, for example, homework surveys and parent forums.

Leaders rigorously monitor the quality of different aspects of the school's work. As a result, teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding. Learning support assistants effectively help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities so that they achieve as well as other pupils. The good curriculum has interesting enrichment opportunities, like visits to Hampton Court, a range of clubs and excellent information and communication technology provision. Care has been taken to make the best use of the limited space available in school. The playground project, which had school council involvement, has provided pupils with a range of interesting areas, including a stage, a quiet shady area, a garden, a trim trail and climbing equipment. This, together with the provision of other resources, means that playtimes are enjoyable and meet a range of needs. Staff are good role models for pupils, including through their participation in the lunchtime running club. There is creativity in the curriculum and the school is developing this further in themed weeks, so that pupils have more opportunities to make decisions, solve problems, work in teams and follow their own lines of enquiry. Procedures for safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety meet statutory requirements.

Children start school with levels of development that are broadly typical of their ages. Progress in the Reception class is good. By the time pupils start Year 1, most are at least at the expected level in their learning goals and standards are above average. Targets are challenging and so pupils continue to progress well. Standards are usually above average by the end of Year 2. In 2008, standards were not as strong as in previous years, particularly in writing. This is because more than a third of pupils in this class have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils now make more rapid progress in reading and writing because of daily letters and sounds sessions for pupils up to Year 3. These pupils work in well planned groups according to the stage they have reached and the school uses good strategies, like providing pupils with small white boards and pens so that all are actively involved. Momentum is maintained in Key Stage 2. The progress of classes, groups and individual pupils is rigorously monitored. Timely academic and/or personal support for pupils is provided if required, so that all pupils are catered for very well. For example, the Rainbows group helps pupils who need emotional support, and specialist equipment is provided for pupils with physical disabilities. Pupils get good oral feedback and work is marked

thoroughly so that they understand the next steps in their learning. This, together with more opportunities for investigation, means that pupils are developing well as independent learners who contribute to their target setting. Science standards have improved because of a school focus on scientific terminology and the provision of more enquiry opportunities. The school identified that although they make good progress, girls do not achieve as well as boys in mathematics. They often lack confidence to solve more complex problems. The school has consequently become involved in a mathematics project for girls, to improve their achievement. Reading standards have improved, with three-quarters of pupils attaining the higher level in reading by the end of Year 6. Daily guided reading sessions have been improved with more opportunities for pupils to develop their comprehension skills. Writing standards also improved, but are still lower than in reading and mathematics. There are some good opportunities to write in other subjects and the school is seeking to develop this further, because staff have correctly identified that expectations are not always high enough in all writing tasks. In some year groups, the above average mobility of pupils has had a detrimental impact on standards achieved overall.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils respond very well to the wealth of opportunities in school. These include taking on a wide range of responsibilities like taking part in fire safety workshops and presenting a proposal for the 'puzzle area' to the mayor, which was successful in acquiring funding. In an assembly, Year 6 pupils took on responsibility for tasks well and also used their initiative to support younger pupils who were having difficulty remembering the words of a hymn. By the time pupils leave the school, they have the necessary skills to be successful young citizens, ready to take full advantage of the next stage in their education. They have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and safe.

The school successfully contributes to community cohesion. It has strong links with other communities and other schools both locally and internationally. It has excellent links with a wide range of organisations to support pupils' learning and welfare. In particular, staff participate in academic projects that mean that pupils benefit from provision that has some outstanding elements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start to school and achieve well, particularly in language and mathematical development so that, by the time they start Year 1, standards are above average. They settle happily into school because of good links with pre-schools and parents and because of a strong nurturing environment. Good parental relationships are maintained through school visits and workshops so that parents understand how their children will learn. The EYFS is managed well and clear priorities are set for improvement. For example, monitoring identified that planning for the outdoor area was not focused enough on what the children would learn rather than what they would do. This has now been successfully addressed. Improvements in the way that letters and sounds are learnt can be seen in children's more rapid progress. Adults work together as an effective team, provide good routines, have high expectations of behaviour and achievement, and relationships are excellent. Consequently children develop well personally. Teaching and learning are good. Stimulating and interesting activities are provided in the classroom and outdoors and there is a good mix of teacher directed and children initiated activities. Good use is made of assessment to provide children with further support if necessary. Care of the children is excellent. For example, a well-trained home school link worker provides emotional support for children where needed. Strong links between Reception and Year 1

ensure that children benefit from both continuity of learning experiences and preparation for the next stage of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and standards in writing by extending the range of challenging opportunities for writing.
- Improve girls' achievement and standards in mathematics by providing them with more opportunities for investigation and problem solving so that they develop as confident mathematicians.

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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?	2
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

15 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Edmund's Catholic Primary School, Godalming, GU7 1PF

Thank you very much for helping us during the inspection, particularly by talking to us about your school and the opportunities that it offers you. We were particularly impressed by your friendliness and politeness. You go to a good school that has some outstanding aspects.

These are the things that we thought were particularly strong in your school.

- Your enjoyment of school is excellent and your attendance is good.
- Your behaviour is excellent and attitudes to your work are very good.
- Your school offers you a wide range of exciting opportunities to learn because it has excellent links with many other organisations. The curriculum offers exceptional opportunities for you to develop into well-rounded people.
- You are learning well. Standards by the end of Year 6 are above average. In 2008, there was a good improvement in reading and science.
- Your classrooms are pleasant places to learn in and you have excellent relationships with adults in school. Your playground offers the opportunity to participate in many interesting activities.
- Adults take excellent care of you and ensure that, if you need help, it is provided.
- You understand very well about staying healthy and keeping safe. You contribute very well to your school community by taking on responsibility for jobs and also to the wider community, for example, by fund raising.
- Your headteacher leads your school exceptionally well and all the staff and governors are working well as a team to provide you with the best possible education.
- Children get off to a good start in the Reception class.

Although your writing has improved, we would like you to try to improve it further, particularly when you are writing in other subjects. We agree with your school that they should give girls more problem solving opportunities so they become more confident mathematicians.

I hope that you will continue to enjoy school and that you become successful adults in whatever you choose to do.

Yours sincerely

Beryl Richmond

Lead Inspector