

St Edmund's Church of England Girls' School and Sports College

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126468
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	315563
Inspection dates	3–4 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Judith Rundle HMI

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

Type of school	Modern (non-selective)
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School	800
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Knapp
Headteacher	Jacqui Goodall
Date of previous school inspection	12 May 2003
School address	Church Road Laverstock Salisbury SP1 1RD
Telephone number	01722 328565
Fax number	01722 421391

Age group	11-16
Inspection dates	3–4 October 2007
Inspection number	315563

© Crown copyright 2007

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

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Edmund's is a secondary modern school. It is smaller than average although numbers have increased since the last inspection and the school is now oversubscribed. Around 6% of students are entitled to a free school meal. The percentage of students from minority ethnic groups is just under 5% and very few students have English as an additional language. The school has rising numbers of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities although these are still average. Attendance has been consistently above that of other schools in recent years. The school is currently subject to a partial refurbishment programme. The school has specialist status in three subject areas of sport, languages, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). It has held the Investor in People award for several years and has achieved Sportsmark gold and the Healthy School 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 Edmund's is a good school with outstanding features. It helps girls become mature, articulate and confident young women by the time they leave and ambitious to achieve more. The headteacher and senior leaders are firmly committed to the development of every student and show great determination to improve the school further and even better meet the needs of every girl at the school. Monitoring of the school's work is good so leaders and governors have a realistic view of its strengths and weaknesses. They use their findings well to plan future developments. They have tackled all issues raised at the last inspection and show good capacity to improve further.

Impact of the specialist status in helping to raise standards has been effective and is particularly strong in physical education with the programme of enrichment activities. The quality of provision in mathematics and ICT has improved through the introduction of assessment to support learning, increased resources and stable leadership of ICT. Although the status for modern foreign languages is new, more opportunities are already available for students to practise speaking in the three modern foreign languages offered at the school.

Standards and the progress students make are much better at Key Stage 3 than at Key Stage 4. Although the school has already identified this and put into place a number of actions to tackle this discrepancy, consistency in their use has yet to be achieved. Teaching is good throughout the school and enables students to make good progress overall from their starting points. Students' academic progress is reviewed well using a learning folder recording achievements but there are inconsistencies in how all girls are helped to understand how well they are doing and the specific steps they need to take to improve further.

Students have outstanding opportunities for personal development that they respond to with relish. They make a significant contribution to decision making in the school via the student spotlight groups and undertake a good range of leadership roles and responsibilities. They are respectful towards each other and although a very small minority of parents identified behaviour as a concern, this is exemplary in lessons and around the school, demonstrating students' high standards for themselves and others. Students enthuse about the opportunities offered to them particularly during the enrichment activities. Older girls appreciate that the curriculum is often adapted to meet their aspirations. The school undertakes outstanding work and collaboration with partners such as parents, local schools and colleges to meet the needs and aspirations of students.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure strategies to raise achievement and standards at Key Stage 4 are consistently implemented across the school.
- Ensure all students are aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve further.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Students' attainment on entry to the school is just below average with few girls attaining at higher levels. Standards reached by the end of Key Stage 3 are significantly above average, enabling the school to meet consistently its challenging targets. All groups of students make

rapid progress in Key Stage 3 and overall achievement is good and frequently better, especially in English and mathematics. There has been a consistent and sustained improvement in students' achievement over the past four years.

Standards at GCSE are also above average with the proportion of students gaining five or more GCSEs, including English and mathematics, being significantly above average. The decline in GCSE results in 2007 was predicted by the school and although good measures were in place to support individual students, the school did not meet its overall target. Standards in specialist subjects are consistently above average reflecting the increased resources and wider curriculum introduced. Progress students make in Key Stage 4 has been below that expected for the last two years, especially for higher attaining girls. Results of external assessments in science and mathematics and work seen during the inspection indicate that the decline in standards is being successfully redressed; girls are making better progress in lessons and the school is well placed to meet its challenging targets in 2008.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Students thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their high attendance and exemplary behaviour. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. A significant feature of students' personal development is their outstanding contribution to the life of both the school and community. The student voice is highly active in aiding the running of the school and girls take on significant leadership roles. For example, they run clubs for fellow peers and in local primary schools, particularly in sport and modern foreign languages. This has been successfully extended to include girls interested in sharing the Christian ethos of the school. Students organise events raising money for charitable causes and an excellent scheme to reward improved tutor groups enables people living in a deprived country to benefit by improving their basic needs.

The high rate of participation in sporting activities helps students to lead a healthier lifestyle. The personal, social and health education programme makes a very strong contribution to the development of students' confidence and self-esteem and enhances their future development in the workplace. Students and parents overwhelmingly agree that girls are made to feel safe at school. Any instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively. As a parent comments, 'St Edmund's has a very caring atmosphere with a sense of purpose. The girls feel it is very much their school'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Highly effective lessons, particularly in Key Stage 3, use interactive whiteboards to extend students' understanding and considerable autonomy is given to students to progress through a wide range of activities. Learning about the impact of erosion through Kung Fu moves is unusual but highly effective! In the majority of lessons, good classroom management, thorough planning and high expectations provide an exciting and challenging environment for effective learning. Students make rapid progress in Key Stage 3 because the majority of teaching is good or better. The school recognises that there is more to do in Key Stage 4, for example in helping all girls to develop independent learning skills. Although strategies are in place to improve teaching, they are not fully embedded across all

subjects. There is very good practice of effective assessment in certain subjects; however, this is not consistent across the school. Teaching assistants work well in partnership with teachers to support students with specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good with outstanding features, particularly the extensive range of enrichment activities offered throughout the week and particularly during the two dedicated afternoons. Enrichment offers a wide and exciting variety of further academic study and enables nearly all students to take part in additional sport. This is a unique programme that is having a positive effect on students' self-esteem and motivation to learn. Activities contribute very effectively to the students' personal, social and health education. Parents confirm that the sports college status has had a very strong impact on their daughters' enthusiasm for the school.

The curriculum is broad and balanced with dance, drama and three modern foreign languages in Key Stage 3. A range of setting, banding and class groupings is used judiciously to provide a varied and appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of girls in Key Stage 3. The Key Stage 4 curriculum is revised effectively each year so that the particular needs and aspirations of students are met. All students learn a modern foreign language in Year 10 and identified students receive additional study support in the 'Pink Room' to improve their overall progress. The work related curriculum has been steadily strengthened with the introduction of the Young Apprenticeship scheme, beauty therapy and applied science. The plans for additional vocational courses and a pathway approach to learning in 2008 are well conceived.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support students receive are good with outstanding features. Staff are highly committed to ensuring all girls succeed. The learning support department makes an outstanding contribution in creating an inclusive, caring and supportive environment. It assists individual students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities very well, and where required utilises the extensive range of external support to allow students to achieve their full potential. Students have good access to the 'Pink' and 'Green' rooms. They comment particularly favourably on the support provided by staff in these rooms for their academic progress and personal welfare. The provision for specific learning difficulties is good. Effective systems are in place for safeguarding students and implementing health and safety procedures. The pastoral system is strong and tutors know their students very well.

The use of the students' learning folders allows tutors to monitor effectively and students to reflect on their performance on a regular basis. Underperformance is identified quickly and action is swiftly taken to reinforce learning. Whilst these systems are in place, the setting of specific targets for individual students is not yet consistent across the school. Where students are given informative feedback this helps them know how well they are doing and what next steps they have to take to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

All members of the school leadership team work effectively together to set a clear direction for improvement. They have correctly identified raising standards and achievement at Key Stage 4 as a key priority. They have implemented a number of effective actions to bring about consistency in teaching, learning and tracking individual pupils' progress. The impact of this work is seen more clearly in mathematics, ICT and textiles, with changes to teaching strategies and increased independent learning opportunities. The formal programme of monitoring and evaluating activities is good and consequently senior leaders have a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Extensive opportunities are taken to collect the views of parents, students and staff, with swift responses where possible such as extending the lunchtime and producing a diary of events for parents. Findings from monitoring activities effectively help form subject development plans and the whole-school improvement plan, including raising further the Christian ethos of the school.

The school leadership team uses external assessment data to set ambitious targets and early indications in external test results show students are on track to meet the targets set for 2008. The new whole-school system for tracking individual pupils' progress has enabled data to be used more effectively to discuss, agree next steps in learning and mentor students on how to improve. However, the use of data by the extended leadership team is not yet consistent.

Leaders in the school have tackled all aspects identified for improvement during the last inspection, showing good capacity to improve further.

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
---	----------------

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	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 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
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 the 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?	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
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
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	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

5 October 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of St Edmund's Church of England Girls School and Sports College, Salisbury, SP1 1RD

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for your contribution to the recent inspection of your school. We spoke to a number of you in groups, during lessons and looked at your work. We also had responses from a large number of your parents.

We found your school to be good overall with some outstanding features. The significant areas are listed below.

- The standards and progress you make in Key Stage 3 are significantly above that of other schools.
- You have outstanding opportunities for personal development and taking lead roles in the work of the school.
- The enrichment programme is unique in offering you such a wide and varied range of activities especially for additional sport and extended learning.
- The influence of the specialist subjects status is strong, particularly for sport and increasingly for mathematics.
- The learning folder is starting to help you reflect on your learning and understand how to improve further.
- The headteacher and leadership team have set a clear vision for the improvement of the school.

We do believe, however, that there are things your school could do better.

- Improve the standards and progress you make at Key Stage 4.
- Ensure that all of you know how well you are doing and can identify the next steps that you have to make to improve your work further.

We would like to thank you for the courteous way that you welcomed us to the school; we compliment you on the exemplary behaviour that we saw and encourage you to continue to work hard. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours faithfully

Judith Rundle HMI Lead inspector

Annex B

5 October 2007

Dear Students

Inspection of St Edmund's Church of England Girls School and Sports College, Salisbury, SP1 1RD

On behalf of the inspection team, I would like to thank you for your contribution to the recent inspection of your school. We spoke to a number of you in groups, during lessons and looked at your work. We also had responses from a large number of your parents.

We found your school to be good overall with some outstanding features. The significant areas are listed below.

- The standards and progress you make in Key Stage 3 are significantly above that of other schools.
- You have outstanding opportunities for personal development and taking lead roles in the work of the school.
- The enrichment programme is unique in offering you such a wide and varied range of activities especially for additional sport and extended learning.
- The influence of the specialist subjects status is strong, particularly for sport and increasingly for mathematics.
- The learning folder is starting to help you reflect on your learning and understand how to improve further.
- The headteacher and leadership team have set a clear vision for the improvement of the school.

We do believe, however, that there are things your school could do better.

- Improve the standards and progress you make at Key Stage 4.
- Ensure that all of you know how well you are doing and can identify the next steps that you have to make to improve your work further.

We would like to thank you for the courteous way that you welcomed us to the school; we compliment you on the exemplary behaviour that we saw and encourage you to continue to work hard. We wish you every success for the future.

Yours faithfully

Judith Rundle HMI
Lead inspector