

St Edward's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103447
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	323829
Inspection dates	27–28 April 2009
Reporting inspector	David Driscoll

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)	387
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Nutt
Headteacher	Tim Hughes
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Greenland Road Selly Park Birmingham B29 7PN

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	27–28 April 2009
Inspection number	323829

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves the area of Selly Oak in Birmingham. The characteristics of the pupils attending the school have changed since the school was last inspected. More than half the school population now come from minority ethnic backgrounds and the proportion who speak English as an additional language is now well above average. The number of faiths represented in the school has also increased. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is above average.

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 provides a good education for its pupils. Good leadership and management have ensured that the school has adapted well to the changing needs of its children. Strengths, such as pupils' outstanding personal development, have been maintained and important areas for improvement, such as the progress of the most able in mathematics, have been tackled successfully. All those with posts of responsibility, from governors to subject coordinators, are involved in checking the quality of what the school provides, especially the effectiveness of teaching, where governors are particularly active. This provides the school's leaders with a clear and accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses and ensures that the school has good capacity to improve further. Priorities for improvement are appropriate, but data from assessments are not always analysed in sufficient detail to identify emerging concerns about performance so they can be tackled at the earliest possible stage. The school's managers have invested time and resources, including extra staffing, in ensuring that the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language are met and that they can make the same good progress as others.

Achievement is good for all groups, as a result of the good teaching and curriculum that pupils receive. Standards are well above average by the time pupils leave Year 6. Progress is good in the Reception classes and Years 1 and 2, and in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Progress in science in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, as the most able do not always make as much progress as they could. They are often given work that is similar to other pupils, in contrast to English and mathematics, where it is much more challenging and closely matched to their needs. Furthermore, the use of targets and the academic guidance provided are not as good as in English. Good attention is paid to ensuring that pupils learn about the different faiths and backgrounds represented in the school, so that the school operates as a very strong community, with excellent relationships and outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development evident throughout the school. Pupils receive good quality care, guidance and support. They, and their needs, are known very well by staff. Parents are, rightly, very impressed with the school. Many describe it as 'excellent', especially in the way that staff treat pupils as individuals when responding to both their personal and academic needs, and in the partnership that the school maintains with parents.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The school provides well for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The majority of children enter St Edward's with skills broadly typical of this age group in all areas of learning. Children make good progress and start Year 1 with standards that are above average in most areas, and with very high levels of personal development. Children thrive in a safe, secure environment where adults know each child very well and work effectively as a team to meet individual needs. The provision for learning and development is good and as a result, children learn well. Teachers plan carefully to ensure a good balance of adult-led and child-led activities that makes the most of the limited indoor and outdoor spaces, although children are not always able to move freely to the outdoor covered area when it rains. Children from different backgrounds and cultures work and play in total harmony. They cooperate well with one another and have good relationships with adults. Children's behaviour and attitude to learning are outstanding. An exceptionally high proportion of parents described the Reception class as

'excellent' or 'very good', praising the outstanding links maintained with staff. Several pointed out that their children were disappointed at the weekends when they could not come to school. Children usually work well independently. However, occasionally the most able have to wait too long for support or for staff to intervene in order to move them on to the next stage in their learning in order to maximise their progress. The Early Years Foundation Stage team is well led and managed. The coordinator has a good understanding of strengths and areas for improvement. Assessments are accurate, but not always analysed in sufficient detail to identify longer-term trends in achievement. Good plans have been produced to enhance the provision further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that targets and academic guidance are used more effectively to improve the progress made by the most able pupils in science in Years 3 to 6, and provide them with more demanding work in order to increase the proportion reaching the highest levels.
- Carry out more detailed analysis of data from assessments at all stages to identify emerging weaknesses in performance and allow improvements to provision to be made at an earlier stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress, so that standards are well above average by the end of Year 2. Around one in five pupils join the school in Years 3 to 6, often with lower standards than those who continued from Year 2. Many of those joining are new to the country and speak English as an additional language. Nonetheless, because all pupils make good progress, standards remain well above average by the end of Year 6. Progress in science in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, and standards are a little above average. The proportion reaching Level 5 in science is only average, whereas the proportions in English and mathematics are now well above average. This is because the most able pupils do not make as much progress in science as they do in other subjects because the work they are given is too similar to that for the others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school is a very happy and harmonious community where pupils get on very well together. Relationships between pupils and adults are very positive. Pupils feel valued and know that adults have their best interests at heart. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they concentrate very well on their work. They love coming to school and are keen to learn. It is no surprise that attendance is above average and improving every year.

Pupils play a good part in the school community. They work together happily, respect the feelings of others and have a keen sense of fair play. They respond positively when given responsibility, for example as members of the active school council or as buddies for younger pupils. They show a lively interest in learning about the backgrounds, faiths and cultures of other pupils.

Pupils show great concern for the welfare of others. Even those in the Reception class have chosen a charity, raised money for it and counted the proceeds. They were especially excited when all their pennies were turned into paper money at the bank! All pupils take part enthusiastically in physical activities and have an excellent understanding of how to eat healthily.

The results are plain to see in the fit and healthy individuals that leave the school in Year 6. Pupils' ability to work constructively with one another, together with their good academic progress, ensures they are well prepared for their futures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

One reason that pupils enjoy coming to school so much is that they have fun when they learn. Teachers use their good knowledge of subjects to plan activities that are stimulating and creative, such as when Year 3 pupils designed their own Hindu body adornment patterns to develop their graphic skills on computers. Most tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities, and are particularly demanding in English and mathematics. However, in science in Years 3 to 6 the most able are often given the same work as others and find it too easy. Teachers provide clear explanations of what pupils need to do, although sometimes these can go on for a bit too long. They also provide good examples of how tasks are to be carried out. This ensures that all pupils are clear about what they are to learn and how to go about it.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A prominent and effective emphasis is given to developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and this is reflected in pupils' good progress in these key areas. The school takes care to ensure that pupils benefit from a broad curriculum that provides a wide range of worthwhile learning opportunities. For example, pupils talk enthusiastically about focus weeks on health education and ecology, and very much enjoyed a multiculturally themed week during the inspection. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, and the school also provides well for those learning English as an additional language. Both groups are given plenty of support in lessons, and are withdrawn for short periods for more intensive help when necessary. Provision for pupils' personal development is a key strength, although there are few planned opportunities to encourage pupils to make decisions and use their initiative. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and clubs. They are greatly enjoyed by pupils and benefit their learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is a highly caring community and teachers know the pupils well. Indeed, the high quality of pupils' personal development stems from the supportive relationships that exist across the school. Parents are justifiably confident that their children are well looked after. The pupils themselves feel exceptionally safe, and are totally confident in talking to teachers if they have any problems, knowing that their concerns will be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly. Child protection procedures fully meet requirements and health and safety checks are thorough. Academic support and guidance are good, and help pupils to progress well. Pupils know their targets in literacy and mathematics, but many are unsure what precisely they need to do in order to improve in mathematics. Targets are not set for pupils in science until they are in Year 6, so they are not as aware of what they are aiming for.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good progress made since the previous inspection has been a result of well- managed changes to provision, in order to meet the changing needs of the school community. Good steps, such as carefully identifying changes in the ethnicity and faiths of pupils in the school and adapting the curriculum, have been taken to ensure good community cohesion and that the needs of all pupils are met equally well. Targets have been too low in the past, but are now much more challenging. Checks on lessons involve governors, senior staff and subject coordinators so that all gain a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. Data on pupils' progress are accurate, but are not always analysed in sufficient detail to provide a clear picture of where progress is faster or slower. This leads to the school often reacting to results at the end of the year, rather than identifying issues at an earlier stage and taking action more quickly. When actions are taken they are highly successful. Improvements in mathematics have resulted in much better progress for more able pupils this year, for example. The greatest strength, however, is the way that all staff are successfully encouraged to focus on each child as an individual, leading to good achievement and outstanding personal development.

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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	2

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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
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	2
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?	2

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 eliminated	2
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**

29 April 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of St Edward's Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, B29 7PN

Thank you very much for all your help when we recently visited your school. We very much enjoyed talking to you and hearing about how you love coming to school because you feel like part of a big, happy family. Your parents and carers feel part of this family too. You told us that you feel totally safe at school, because all the grown-ups take such good care of you. Your parents and carers can be very proud of your excellent behaviour and how hard you work. We were very impressed by how well you all get on with one another and how fit and healthy you are.

You go to a good school. Because you are taught well you learn more quickly than we often see, and you are much better at English and mathematics than most other children of your age by the time you leave. Your science is not quite as good as other subjects so we have asked your teachers to make sure you all get work that you do not find too easy. We have also asked them to set you targets and help you to reach them in the same way as they do in English. You enjoy lessons, because they are fun and interesting. You particularly enjoyed the multicultural week that took place during our visit.

Your school is changing. More pupils are joining from different countries and backgrounds who speak languages and live their lives in ways that are different from others. This is great. All your teachers have changed what they do, so that you can all learn about each other and how other people live around the world. It has also meant that the people who run the school have had to make changes to make sure that everyone can learn as quickly as each other. They have done this very well. They know what helps you to learn best, because they all take turns to watch lessons. They also know how well you are doing, but don't always look for patterns in your test results to see if some classes are doing better than others, for example. We have asked them to do this, so they can make your school better even more quickly.

With all best wishes for your futures,

Yours faithfully

David Driscoll

Lead inspector