

St Edmunds RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105527
Local Authority	Manchester
Inspection number	324236
Inspection date	1 April 2009
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	184
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	Rev Father Buckley
Headteacher	Mrs Maureen Duffy
Date of previous school inspection	12 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Upper Monsall Street Miles Platting Manchester M40 8NG
Telephone number	0161 2051700
Fax number	0161 2034658

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: standards and achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2, attendance, and the involvement of subject leaders and governors in evaluating school effectiveness. Evidence was collected from the school's self-evaluation form; nationally published assessment data; the school's own assessment records; relevant policies; observations of the school at work, including visits to lessons; and analysis of parents' questionnaires. Discussions were also held with staff with management responsibilities, two governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence that the school's own assessments of these aspects, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

The school is situated about a mile from the city centre and is smaller than average. It serves a community with some levels of social and economic deprivation. The school has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage with a Nursery and a Reception unit. Ten per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and only a very small number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is very high. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Thirty pupils were admitted from a nearby school which closed last year. The school has Healthy Schools and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. Parents feel very much a part of the school family, which is extremely supportive and caring. In their very positive response to the inspection questionnaire, a typical comment was, 'The staff are lovely with the children.' Many parents admire and respect the headteacher's experience, expertise and devotion to the school and its pupils, describing the headteacher as a 'fabulous leader' and a 'perfect role model for pupils'.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Community spirit is strong and all pupils, including those from the closed school, clearly enjoy coming to school. Most pupils relish the responsibilities bestowed on them, performing their duties as monitors with pride. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Behaviour in lessons and around school is exemplary with pupils showing high levels of respect for staff and for one another. All have a clear understanding of a healthy lifestyle, taking part in a wide range of sporting activities and in sustainable initiatives such as the Green Miles project. Year 3 pupils demonstrated their knowledge by writing newspaper articles giving tips on living a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage of education, gaining valuable skills from the excellent curriculum and their own positive attitudes. All pupils work very hard and they always try to do their best in everything.

Overall, standards are above average and pupils' achievement is outstanding. This includes pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities who benefit from the outstanding teaching which is tailored to meet their individual learning needs. The national league tables show that the school is currently top of the league of schools in the local authority for achievement and tenth nationally. The 2008 unvalidated national test results for Year 6 show a continuing trend of progressive improvement. Pupils, who entered school with skills that were exceptionally low, left Year 6 with significantly high standards in mathematics and science. Over half attained above average standards in mathematics and three quarters in science. Standards in English were average in 2008. Staff are determined to ensure that standards in all three subjects are equally as high. Writing was identified as an area of relative weakness and the school has responded with typical thoroughness prioritising writing skills in literacy sessions and in all other subjects. As a result, standards in English have risen significantly to above average. The school is designated as a champion school for mathematics and staff share their considerable expertise in this subject with staff from a small group of schools in the area. Currently, pupils are on course to achieve their increased and very challenging targets in English, mathematics and science. The transition from Reception is managed carefully and the school's assessment data show that most pupils make excellent progress from their starting point in Year 1. Current standards in Year 2 are average in reading, writing and mathematics, reflecting the lower starting points of the pupils and the larger proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The quality of teaching and learning, and the curriculum are outstanding and largely responsible for the high standards. Standards are rising because teachers have high expectations of pupils and plan challenging work to hold their interest in lessons. Pupils respond by concentrating and beavering away at tasks such as calculating cash discounts from a Chinese food menu or writing accounts from the perspective of an archaeologist exploring and excavating an Anglo-Saxon site. Excellent displays of pupils' work show the breadth and quality of the curriculum and create a stimulating learning environment. Having computers on hand in the classrooms ensures that these are used very effectively to support and enhance pupils' learning

and this helps pupils develop advanced computer skills. Excellent teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that achievement for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is outstanding. Teachers assess individual pupils' progress carefully and are quick to identify any not making the expected progress. Their marking gives pupils clear and detailed guidance on how to improve. Pupils themselves are becoming reliable in accurately assessing their work and their progress towards their targets.

The outstanding level of care and concern for everyone's welfare is evident and all safeguarding requirements are met. Pupils say they feel very safe and know who to turn to if they have any concerns. However, attendance remains just below average. Improving attendance has been a constant struggle since the previous inspection. Although the school has managed to reduce the persistent absence of some pupils, a small but significant number of pupils are frequently absent. The school's strong links with outside agencies ensure that individual needs of vulnerable pupils or those experiencing learning difficulties are met very effectively, enabling all to make outstanding progress.

Leadership and management, including governance, are outstanding. The school is a strong, cohesive community because of the shared commitment to pupils by an enthusiastic, dedicated and professional staff. Unusually, there have been no changes to key post holders or governors since the previous inspection. This stability enables the school to improve continuously without any disruption. All staff work exceptionally well as a team to ensure equality of opportunity for all. Their collective determination to raise standards is having a marked impact on how well pupils achieve and is reflected in increasingly challenging targets. The role of subject leaders has been strengthened and they rigorously evaluate standards and the quality of provision for their subjects. Staff have an accurate, if modest, view of how well the school is doing and relevant priorities for improvement are identified. Community cohesion is good. Excellent links with the local community, the very strong links with African communities and learning to speak German are adding significantly to pupils' knowledge of the international community and their cultural development. The school has audited its place within the local and wider communities and is preparing its strategy to improve further each link. Governors are just as passionate as staff about school improvement. They are rapidly developing their role in helping the school evaluate its effectiveness and visit regularly to find out for themselves how well priorities are being addressed. Financial management is a strength and a large surplus budget to improve the accommodation with new windows and larger, better staff facilities, has been built up. The school has an outstanding capacity to go on improving and is providing excellent value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get off to a flying start in Nursery and Reception. They enter Nursery with knowledge and skills that are exceptionally low, particularly in language development compared with others of a similar age. From their extremely low starting points they make outstanding progress. By the time children enter Year 1 their levels of attainment can vary because of the differing abilities of the small class sizes. However, their attainment is currently above that expected for their age. Their achievement in writing is a particular strength. This is because adults are quick to spot opportunities in play that can be exploited to develop language and writing skills. For example, in a role-play where Nursery children were dressing up and pretending to be police officers they wrote up crime reports. Children make giant strides in their personal development because of the supportive, warm and caring relationships between adults and children. They

show excitement about the things they do. Routines, such as taking turns and acting as monitors, contribute positively to their outstanding personal development. The setting is exceptionally well led and managed and this ensures that the quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers and other adults collaborate effectively to ensure that experiences are closely tailored to every individual's needs. These needs are well understood due to the meticulous observations made of children's progress. Adults know every child inside out and this is central to children's rapid development. Induction arrangements are extremely well organised and start when teachers visit children in their own homes before they start school. Because of this, children settle rapidly in Nursery and quickly grow in self-esteem. This continues to grow throughout Reception as they are encouraged to be independent and to take responsibility. By the time they enter Year 1, all are confident learners well placed for their next steps in learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance, especially for the few who are regularly absent.

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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?	1
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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
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?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1

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	3
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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**

Thank you for your warm and very friendly welcome when we came to inspect your school. You are right to be proud of your school! It is outstanding in many ways and we can see why you enjoy every day so much. All the staff take excellent care of you and are always there when you need them to be. School is just like one big happy family.

In the Nursery and Reception unit your teachers and their helpers are working very hard to make sure you do really well. There are always lots of interesting things to do and enjoy both indoors and outside. Those of you who were pretending to be police officers did a fantastic job writing your crime sheets and building prison cells with the wooden blocks.

It was good to see all of you in Years 1 to 6 getting on so well together. We were impressed by your amazingly good behaviour in lessons. You concentrate well and work very hard. It is easy to see why you achieve such high standards in science and mathematics. Year 5 pupils were brilliant at calculating discounts for their Chinese food. I hope the Year 3 science experiment outdoors proves that grass does need the sunshine. Teachers and their assistants are very quick to help you if you need it. You are doing loads of writing now and it is paying dividends as your skills in spelling, handwriting and using 'wow' words to add interest to your stories are getting better and better. Keep up the good work and, before long, standards in English will be as high as they are in mathematics and science.

We have asked the school staff to concentrate on finding ways to improve attendance and we hope that all of you will try your best not to miss school. It is hard to understand why any of you want to stay at home when there are so many interesting and exciting things for you to do at school. It really upsets your headteacher and teachers when you are away as they know you are missing out on all the wonderful things they have planned for you.

Thank you, again, for making our visit to your school such an enjoyable one.