

# St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123225
<b>Local Authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327872
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Raminder Arora

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	239
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Helen Pearson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Margaret Crompton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	12 October 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Radley Road Abingdon OX14 3PP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01235 521558

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	23 March 2009
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**Fax number**

01235 532778

**Age group** 3-11

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**Inspection date** 23 March 2009

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the quality of teaching and the resultant progress that pupils make, particularly in English
- pupils' personal development, particularly their behaviour, attitudes and attendance
- the pastoral care the school provides, and how well it keeps track of, and supports pupils' progress.

Evidence was gathered from:

- observations of lessons and break times
- discussions with school staff, the Chair of Governors and pupils
- the school's documentation, particularly records of pupils' progress
- questionnaires returned by parents
- examples of pupils' work.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is an average-sized Voluntary Aided school. The school is in Abingdon but draws its pupils from a wider area. A high proportion of pupils come from Roman Catholic families. More recently, an increasing proportion is coming from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. Currently 10 pupils are at the early stages of learning the language. A below-average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils struggle with basic literacy and numeracy, or have behavioural and emotional problems. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is much lower than the national average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made for younger children in the Nursery, where they attend part time, and for older children full time in the Reception classes. A new headteacher was appointed last summer.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well because of good teaching. Pupils of different abilities and backgrounds make good progress from their starting points, particularly in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 2 standards are generally average, and by the end of Year 6 they are above average. A relative weakness is writing, shown by results in both Year 2 and Year 6, and this is being addressed successfully. Provisional results for 2008 show that pupils in Year 6 have achieved well in relation to their attainment on entry, particularly in mathematics and science. However, comparatively fewer pupils have secured the higher Level 5 in English. As a result, staff are rightly continuing to focus on this subject, especially the development of writing throughout the school. Staff are particularly effective in giving extra help to pupils who struggle with their work, so that they make good progress and overcome their difficulties. Boys and girls, and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, all make similarly good progress.

The quality of teaching is stronger in the upper Key Stage 2 classes, where pupils show rapid progress. The fast-improving monitoring of provision by the senior staff and the careful tracking of pupils' progress have contributed greatly to this. There are inconsistencies in aspects of teaching, and lessons vary from satisfactory to good. In the younger classes teachers generally manage pupils well, and maintain a brisk pace. This means that pupils concentrate well and learn a good deal in the time available. Teachers often enhance their clear explanations with good use of the interactive whiteboards, which engages pupils' interest and generates enthusiasm. Teachers make good use of skilled teaching assistants in many lessons, particularly in supporting pupils who might otherwise struggle with their work. In better lessons teachers make good use of their knowledge of individual pupils' progress to match work carefully to their different needs. In these lessons, pupils also enjoy high levels of challenge and this help to promote their good learning. Teachers track pupils' progress effectively and set appropriate targets for improvement. However, pupils are not fully involved in assessing their own learning or consistently gaining an understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do next.

The school has a good curriculum with strengths in English, mathematics, science, arts and design and technology. Pupils report that they enjoy lessons, as well as the good range of extra-curricular clubs, for example art, chess and the nurture club. The school provides good care, guidance and support for its pupils. Liaison with external agencies is used efficiently to secure children's welfare and ensure they achieve as well as they can. Recently revised assessment and tracking systems allow the school to closely monitor the progress pupils are making towards their targets. Teachers have a good understanding of individuals' needs. Any who struggle with their work, or who are not making enough progress, are quickly identified and supported. Pupils feel that they are looked after well, and their parents agree. They are confident that the adults at school will provide the help that they need, both in lessons and in response to personal needs. Pupils' personal development is outstanding because of the strong pastoral care. The measures taken to build successfully on existing good systems for both academic and pastoral support are impacting well on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Consistently good behaviour was noted during the inspection. Pupils have positive relationships with each other and with staff. Their needs are addressed and monitored in a coherent fashion. Boys and girls from different ethnic groups play and work together harmoniously. They understand fully how to lead healthy lives, keep safe and avoid danger. Their well-developed teamwork skills and a secure grounding in the basic skills stand them in good stead for their future education. Pupils

contribute well to the school community, for example through the school council, by acting as monitors, or by working with pupils from younger classes. Attendance is good and monitored rigorously.

Underpinning the school's success are good leadership and management. The new headteacher is providing a very clear direction which has impacted well on recent improvements, for example, systems for tracking pupils' progress, strengthening their pastoral care and taking appropriate measures to improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. She recognised the need to reorganise the team of senior managers and subject leaders so that they can also become involved in gaining a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their monitoring role is being improved through appropriate training opportunities. Governors also have a good understanding of the school, and effectively hold it to account for its performance. The school's contribution to community cohesion at a local and national level is good. The International award has usefully supported pupils' awareness of the diversity through, for example, good links with a school in Germany. There are examples of good practice, such as the educational links made with services in the neighbouring boroughs and the impact of this work has been good. The parents are generally happy with the school and through their many well-organised parents' association and school events, support the school generously. However, a small number of those who responded to parental questionnaires expressed dissatisfaction and felt their views had not been readily taken on board. The leaders recognise the importance of strengthening communication with parents. The school's success in addressing past issues shows that it is well placed to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Children quickly settle into the Nursery and Reception classes, follow the clear class routines and rapidly develop confident and positive attitudes. On entry to the Reception class, levels of attainment are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Children make satisfactory progress and reach the levels expected for their age by the start of Year 1. This is because the provision made for them, including the quality of teaching and systems for tracking children's progress, is satisfactory overall. Relationships between staff and children and provision for children's care, well-being and safety are good. Children make good progress in developing their personal and social skills. Staff provide a range of interesting things for children to do which engage their interest and enthusiasm. Sometimes, however, the opportunities to intervene in the activities chosen by children and develop their understanding further are missed by staff. There is an appropriate balance between activities directed by the staff and those which children choose for themselves. The curriculum enables children to learn from first-hand experiences that children really enjoy. However, the provision for children to learn outdoors has weaknesses. The lack of appropriate planning and resourcing of the outdoor Early Years curriculum for the youngest children restricts opportunities for consolidation and independent learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Develop children's independent learning skills by improving planning and provision for the outdoor curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Improve the consistency of all teaching to the level of the best.

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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?	2
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?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup>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.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
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	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**

03 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Edmund's Catholic Primary School, Abingdon, OX14 3PP

I am writing to thank you for all your valuable contributions to the inspection we carried out in your school. Your views are very important and have helped us to explain more clearly everything that goes on in your school. We talked to many of you during lessons, around the school and also with the school council. My colleague and I had such a good time finding out about what you learn and we were well looked after in just the way you are.

You have a good school and some of the reasons for that are down to you and your parents. We were impressed by your good behaviour and the consideration you show to each other. No one is left out and that is very important. You make good progress in your work over time, because learning is made interesting. You understand about healthy lifestyles and are keen to eat healthily and take exercise. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes also told us how much they enjoy learning. Your headteacher, teachers and governors are good at thinking of ways to improve your school.

To make your school even better, your teachers are going to work at making all the lessons good, so that you continue to succeed in all your learning.

Also, the staff in the Nursery and Reception classes are going to work on providing children with an exciting outdoor classroom to make their learning even more interesting and enjoyable.

I hope you carry on working hard and enjoying all the activities that are available to you. Good luck on your learning journey.

Yours faithfully

Raminder Arora

Lead Inspector