

2St Edward's Royal Free Ecumenical Middle School, Windsor

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110086
Local Authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	337437
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Clare Gillies

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	363
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derek Moss
Headteacher	Rod Welsh
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2007
School address	Parsonage Lane Windsor SL4 5EN
Telephone number	01753 867809
Fax number	01753 865001
Email address	welsr001@rbwm.org

Age group	9–13
Inspection dates	8–9 July 2010
Inspection number	337437

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2010

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who observed 23 lessons and saw all 21 teachers in either form time or lessons. No religious education lessons were seen. Meetings were held with governors, pupils, staff and the deputy headteacher of Windsor Boys' School. The lead inspector spoke to the School Improvement Partner by telephone. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's development plan, data about current standards, documents about the school's arts specialism and 156 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- evidence of the progress in Years 5 and 6 being closer to that in Years 7 and 8 and consideration of how the school is improving individual pupils' achievement
- the quality of learning and whether teachers use relevant, helpful and supportive questioning, interactive whiteboards and creativity to make their teaching as effective as possible.

Information about the school

St Edward's is an ecumenical, Church of England and Roman Catholic school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below that seen nationally. A very small number of pupils do not speak English as their first language though none is at an early stage of learning the language. One in five pupils is on the special educational needs register of whom just under a quarter (a well above average proportion), have statements of special educational needs; the majority have support for speech, language and communication or autism. Affiliated to Windsor Boys' School, the school has associated specialist arts status focusing on English, art and music. It recently attained the Artsmark Gold award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

St Edward's gives its pupils an outstanding education in the broadest sense. Parents describe it as 'a valuable school in our community' with 'a lovely inclusive family feeling'. By the end of Year 8 pupils attain well above average standards and pupils' achievement and the progress that they make over four years are good. They develop into thoughtful and polite teenagers who are ready to move on to upper school with confidence.

Pupils are fortunate that during their time at the school they are able to experience numerous enjoyable activities. For example one Year 5 pupil attends choir, recorders, table tennis, chess and gardening clubs, enjoyed the school retreat and the end of term discos and was a member of the cast of 'Oliver'; all in addition to other visits linked to his role as a member of the school council. With such an outstanding curriculum it is not surprising that the overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are happy with their child's experience at school. Attendance is very high, reflecting the fact that pupils really enjoy being at school.

Underpinning all the academic and non-academic achievements is a staff team which includes dedicated teachers, learning support assistants and other staff. Learning and teaching are good in the large majority of lessons and outstanding in some. Pupils behave extremely well, work hard and are keen to do their best. Individual teachers have skills in different aspects of teaching. Leaders know the push for more outstanding learning requires sharing of such expertise, for example in promoting independent learning, using modern technology creatively, making work relevant to pupils' lives and matching work and questions to pupils' abilities, particularly higher attainers.

Two assistant headteachers monitor the excellent quality of care, guidance and support which pupils receive. They keep in close contact with parents and carers, not just those whose children are on the special educational needs register. Form tutors carry out their roles diligently. All staff promote safety and healthy lifestyles to which pupils respond by feeling secure and nurtured. Careful thought goes into the transition stages and the majority of pupils settle very quickly.

The fact that the headteacher has overseen such significant improvements to attainment and standards since the previous inspection and continues to be supported by a challenging and demanding governing body and enthusiastic staff, reinforces the school's outstanding capacity to improve.

Practically all parents are delighted that their children attend the school. A striking feature of their written comments on the questionnaires was the number of times they used words such as happy, confident and flourishing. Two encapsulated the tone of many saying that, 'I could not ask for a better place for my child to be educated' and

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

'It's a fabulous school'.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- To generate more outstanding learning, share and develop teachers' skills by:
 - planning work and asking questions to match pupils' different abilities, particularly for higher attainers
 - imaginative use of technologies such as interactive whiteboards
 - making topics reflect real life and citizenship so that they become more meaningful and explicit to pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

The school has successfully focused on increasing progress in Years 5 and 6 and this year pupils have achieved well and attained above average standards in many subjects. Learning and progress accelerate in Years 7 and 8 so that by the end of Year 8 many of them attain the standards expected for pupils at the end of Year 9 and practically all of them exceed their targets. The introduction of a new reading programme has made a positive difference to pupils', especially boys', attitudes to reading and enhanced their performance. Teachers carefully consider each individual pupil to explore reasons and put interventions in place if they have concerns about their learning. No particular group of pupils underachieve.

Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is evident in the overwhelming majority of lessons. They particularly enjoy working in groups or pairs, for example solving mathematical problems, pacing themselves to run 800 metres, composing musical chords or discussing the genre of books in English. Pupils concentrate hard and work diligently in most lessons whether mastering batik in art, evaluating food chains in science or adjusting photographs using computers. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and they are welcoming and respectful of each other, the staff and visitors. During the inspection, a very few Year 8 boys, feeling ready to move on to upper school, did not maintain the highest standards of behaviour expected by the school.

Pupils' spirituality and cultural awareness is strengthened well by religious education lessons, assemblies and learning about different cultures and faiths in several subjects. As one Year 5 pupil said, 'Outside of lessons we are helped to be good people', reflecting the strong moral standards promoted. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident that the rare instances of bullying, mostly name calling, are dealt with promptly and fairly. Exclusions are extremely rare. Pupils are fully aware about the importance of leading healthy lives, participate in large numbers in after-school sports, look forward to eating food grown on the school's allotment and understand why lunch boxes are checked!

In addition to the effective school council, pupils' leadership and enterprise skills develop in many ways, taking on positions of responsibility, raising funds for charities or joining clubs such as the Eco Warriors. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 enjoy completing 'Pledges' which

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

are challenges to help others in the community. Despite a most impressive mock school election this year, the school appreciates that pupils' knowledge of citizenship, delivered largely through other subjects, could be strengthened. Pupils' computer skills and presentation of work, including handwriting, are good but not as outstanding as their numeracy and reading levels.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is predominantly good with examples of outstanding practice in several subjects. Years 5 and 6 pupils benefit from being taught by subject specialists in French, science and music particularly. Mathematics teachers are especially good at making learning relevant to everyday situations, seen in Years 6 and 8. Pupils responded keenly to a history lesson on why people moved to Windsor after the Second World War.

The school is determined to increase the amount of outstanding learning and expertise exists which can be shared beneficially. Occasionally, some teachers talk for too long and over direct the learning or they do not use the interactive whiteboards imaginatively enough to make learning stimulating. Some teachers are more skilful than others at

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

preparing work or asking questions which match the range of pupils' abilities so that all achieve equally well. Evidence from parents' and pupils' comments reveal that provision for gifted and talented pupils, some of which is very good, is better in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6.

As well as dramatic productions, concerts and an exciting arts week the school's specialism permeates school life, for example using role play in geography, making a film about tolerance in personal, social, moral and health education or visiting a local arts centre to develop pupils' team-working skills and confidence; consequently, this impacts positively on pupils' attainment. Pupils much appreciate the large number of sports clubs, all open to boys and girls, and these and many other activities provide numerous opportunities for pupils to mix with other schools.

The school supports vulnerable pupils and those with particular learning, social or emotional needs extremely well. A recently introduced programme called Friends for Life is helping a few Year 5 pupils to gain confidence. It is too early to evaluate the outcomes but it complements the school's participation in the Targeted Mental Health in Schools programme which helps children at risk of having emotional and mental health problems.

Links with first and upper schools and a local youth and community centre help pupils to change schools confidently. In each year, low attaining pupils or those with particular learning needs are taught in small groups, supported by learning-support assistants who help them very well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has generated a significant improvement in attainment and achievement and increased the popularity of the school. He uses the strengths of the senior leadership team well, particularly to ensure high quality care for any pupil who needs support; the structure and management of inclusion has been praised by the local authority. Subject leaders cultivate enthusiasm among those teaching their subjects and several are sharp at interpreting data to analyse progress and set targets to help pupils to achieve even more.

Over four out of five staff completed an inspection questionnaire which revealed that morale is very high. A couple of them felt that their professional development needs were not met but their support for the school was overwhelmingly positive: 'This is the

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

best school I have ever worked in; I enjoy working with people who are dedicated and enthusiastic.' Generated by the headteacher, ambition to keep improving is evident among all the staff. The headteacher, governors and School Improvement Partner understand the school's strengths and areas for development extremely well.

Senior leaders' evaluation and monitoring of teaching and learning are good and their judgements on its quality are sound. However, they do not regularly observe lessons focusing on particular skills, to highlight and share individual teachers' expertise. A recent audit of how different subjects include citizenship has yet to be followed up by evaluating whether this happens well enough.

Safeguarding procedures and policies are thorough. Safe practices, for example in design and technology or physical education or when planning trips, have a high profile and pupils are taught about many aspects that impact on their lives, from e-safety to road safety. The size of the school is a factor in its promotion of equal opportunities because so many pupils can take part in productions or find an extra-curricular activity in which they can excel. The whole school had a ten-minute doodle session recently so that every pupil has work on display in the hall. Knowing pupils' backgrounds well, teachers foster their awareness of diversity.

The governing body, led by a dedicated chair, is very experienced and brings a wealth of relevant expertise and local knowledge to its deliberations. Over half the governors are or have been parents. They examine data to discuss individual pupils who do not appear to be moving forward fast enough. Following a key issue for improvement in the previous inspection report, the school now has a short, clear improvement plan which governors monitor effectively and regularly. Governors are proud of the school's arts specialism and use this to support key areas, for example acquiring funds for artists in residence to extend creativity or a programme linking literacy and computer skills for Year 5 pupils.

The school's partnership with other educational establishments and organisations in the local area is extensive and fostered to benefit pupils' learning or their social needs. Pupils are fully involved in the local community, whether planting flowers in the Town Hall borders, singing to local senior citizens, helping in first schools or involvement in church activities. Contacts with a school in Wembley, a trip to France, spiritual retreats and a project in India all support pupils' wider sense of community cohesion. The school has a good insight into what its pupils must learn to broaden their understanding of the wider world. Nevertheless, valuable cultural studies in many subjects, for example aboriginal art, tend to overemphasise the less developed world over European or other developed countries.

In response to a survey a few years ago, a parent governor set up SERFERS (St Edward's Royal Free Enquiries, Responses, Suggestions) which offers parents and carers a variety of ways, including online, for them to make contact and express their ideas or thoughts on any school matters. In addition to complimenting the headteacher and teachers, parents and carers observed that the office staff are extremely helpful.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Over 40% of parents completed the inspection questionnaire and many wrote long comments praising the school. Twelve parents wrote negative comments. Four felt that their child's learning or emotional needs were not well supported, for example that their child required a statement of special educational needs or was not receiving the right level of care. Discussions with senior leaders and relevant staff and extensive examination of documentation, including the school's emails and other contact with parents, did not lead inspectors to support these concerns. Outlines of these and other, single comments were shared with the headteacher. Inspectors were confident that he and/or other senior leaders respond to any parental concerns and take action when appropriate.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Edward's Royal Free Ecumenical Middle School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	87	56	61	39	6	4	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	98	63	56	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	72	46	78	50	4	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	73	47	70	45	7	4	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	73	47	75	48	3	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	37	87	56	5	3	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	76	49	71	46	6	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	67	43	77	49	3	2	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	71	46	72	46	4	3	4	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	35	84	54	6	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	29	91	58	9	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	95	61	55	35	2	1	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	105	67	47	30	0	0	3	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Edward's Royal Free Ecumenical Middle School, Windsor SL4 5EN

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school and sharing your thoughts about school life with us. We managed to meet many of you and wish we had had time to talk to you all. One of your parents wrote 'This is a fabulous school' and we agree. You get an outstanding education, partly because you are taught well but also because the curriculum is not just your lessons but all the wonderful extra things you do ? trips, visits, sports, arts, music, clubs and activities.

It is the teachers and other staff who give up time to make these things happen and you are lucky that they organise so many opportunities. You and your parents also appreciate that the staff care for your well-being and that, if you have any work or personal problems, you are supported and helped to make things better.

We were impressed with your behaviour and how many of you lead healthy and active lives. You are sensitive to others who are not as fortunate as you and we saw several examples of you helping each other, in lessons and around the school. You work really well together in groups and encourage each other. I shall not forget the lesson I watched where the whole of a Year 7 class ran 800 metres in the hot sunshine and those who finished fast cheered on the others.

In even outstanding schools there are things that could be even better. So, we have asked the headteacher to increase the amount of really special teaching by helping teachers to share their expertise so that they a) plan work and ask questions which match your different abilities b) use the interactive whiteboards imaginatively and c) make all the topics you study relevant to real life.

We much enjoyed our two days in your school and hope that you will all have excellent summer holidays when they start, quite soon!

Yours sincerely

Clare Gillies

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.