

St Edward's Roman Catholic/Church of England School, Poole

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113893
Local Authority	Poole
Inspection number	338262
Inspection dates	27–28 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Janet Simms

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	12–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	857
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Morris
Headteacher	Pola Bevan
Date of previous school inspection	16 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. They observed 38 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 36 teachers and undertook several shorter observations. In some cases inspectors were accompanied by senior staff. Inspectors held discussions with managers, middle leaders and other staff and with a governor by telephone. They talked to three groups of students formally and with many students in lessons, at break-times and individually around the school. Inspectors observed the school's work, attended an assembly, visited the Learning Centre and observed students at breaks and when leaving the premises. They scrutinised a great deal of school documentation including student assessment and tracking records, documents related to safeguarding, attendance data, minutes of governing body meetings and records of the monitoring of teaching. They analysed 204 parents' and carers' questionnaires, several with additional comments, and those from staff and students.

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

- The impact of difficult recruitment on school provision and students' outcomes.
- Students' current attainment and achievement and whether these are higher than in 2009.
- Whether behaviour and attendance impact adversely on outcomes for any groups.
- All aspects of the sixth form

Information about the school

This medium-sized comprehensive school takes students from a large number of primary schools and lies in an area of selective education. Just over half the students are from Catholic families, with most of the remainder from Church of England backgrounds. A high proportion have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly moderate learning difficulties, with a large number of statemented students on roll, particularly in Years 9 and 10. The school has had difficulties with some recruitment in the last year and one assistant headteacher started only the week before the inspection. The area is changing the age of transfer into secondary education to Year 7, for which most schools have secured funding, but for this school, finances are currently uncertain. At the time of inspection, several groups of students were absent on study leave.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school where students achieve well. Despite recruitment and funding difficulties, the school has made very significant improvements to major areas such as the sixth form since its previous inspection. As a result, more students stay on to experience a good quality of post-16 education.

From attainment, which is slightly below average on entry, increasingly good progress leads to above-average attainment at the end of Year 11 across most subjects.

Improvement in English in particular leads to high attainment, with abler students now achieving their full potential earlier than expected. Achievement in mathematics has improved and new science leadership is starting to accelerate progress. Although achievement is not quite even between subjects, there are no significant differences in the progress of different groups. Good evaluation ensures that senior leaders identify emerging issues accurately and implement effective measures to secure improvement.

Senior staff promote a strong ethos of inclusion and equality of opportunity which are key factors underpinning good care, guidance and support. They managed the provision for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities well during a lengthy period without a coordinator, and a recent appointment is resolving a few residual issues. Examples of outstanding progress for individuals with complex needs were observed and these students' overall progress is as good as their peers.

Students' good key skills, combined with thoughtful, reflective responses and ability to work together effectively in groups, all provide a secure foundation for their future working lives. They also testify to good personal development, and attendance has improved from below to above average this year. Teaching is good and senior staff evaluate weaker aspects accurately. They recognise that marking, planning for different abilities and occasionally behaviour management need to be more consistent, though excellent practice exists in all these areas. The school has successfully eliminated almost all low-level disruptive behaviour, but some questionnaire responses indicate that the potentially volatile behaviour of a very small minority occasionally disturbs learning when not well managed. Inspection found that good behaviour predominates inside and outside the classroom.

Good leadership, management and governance have been key to improving progress and the school's successful track record shows that it has good capacity to sustain further improvement. An active decision last year to prioritise key improvements 'on the ground' was successful, but some aspects lag behind. For example, whilst leaders have been successful in creating a harmonious environment for learning and promoting community cohesion at a local level, the school's strategy in relation to the national and

international dimensions is not so well developed. Senior managers also recognise that the curriculum provides a limited range of 14-18 studies and are planning extended provision for September 2010 and beyond

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of provision by:
 - broadening the 14-19 curriculum to match the needs of all students more closely
 - ensuring that teachers plan lessons to provide work which more precisely matches all students' needs
 - extending the good quality of oral feedback in lessons into written marking which guides students' next steps for improvement
 - ensuring that the volatile behaviour of a few students is managed consistently well
- Improve the school's promotion of community cohesion by
 - developing a more systematic approach to planning these aspects across the school
 - strengthening and extending its contribution both nationally and overseas

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Good progress results from teachers' high expectations and good planning such as opportunities for students to talk together and explore ideas. In a Year 9 English lesson, for instance, students progressed well in exploring characterisation and attitudes. Their text presented controversial aspects of cross-sectarian relationships and planned discussions prepared students well for very productive role play. In Year 9 drama, students confidently rehearsed scenes and performed them articulately for an audience, giving sensitive, well-considered critique to other groups. In a Year 10 German lesson, students understood the links between subjects well because new vocabulary was well linked to healthy eating. Likewise, a good Year 9 history lesson led to outstanding expressions of emotion from students as they explored the experiences of Holocaust survivors. This showed characteristically good development of social, moral and spiritual understanding. Enjoyable, active learning in a Year 9 geography lesson created good understanding of how to construct dwellings from limited materials, to withstand floods and gales in a Brazilian 'favella' or slum. In most lessons, good behaviour creates a positive learning environment and students work very well together, learning from others and from staff. Where progress is slower, work is sometimes not planned to match needs well enough, or to challenge more able students. In science, for instance, satisfactory progress was mostly observed, but very new leadership of this department is accelerating progress. In one Year 10 science lesson involving titration, progress was good and students provided good peer assessment which helped others understand how to improve.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Good teaching mainly accounts for the improved achievement evident in most subjects. Tracking of students' progress has improved considerably, providing a secure framework for staff to measure achievement and identify any interventions needed. Detailed written assessment and guidance through marking is patchy, but a very good model exists in the sixth form. The curriculum is satisfactory, but is being strengthened because managers realise its limitations in providing for the needs of all students. Good care, guidance and support are much appreciated by many parents and carers who added comments to the questionnaires. Many express their gratitude to staff for their enthusiasm and effectiveness in successfully nurturing their children's good academic and personal development. The school's own recent surveys mirrored inspection questionnaires which show that a high proportion of students feel that the school does not help them to be healthy. Managers immediately involved the school council in investigating this matter and the school awaits results. Inspection found that provision such as extra-curricular sports, healthy lunches, drugs and relationships education is satisfactory.

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

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are good. Now complete, the well-balanced senior team provides good ambition and drive. Managers coped well while the team was under strength, ensuring that improvement was sustained. Good monitoring and evaluation, particularly by middle managers, places accountability for aspects of achievement, learning, ensuring equality of opportunity and other key areas firmly in the right places and any potential discrimination is tackled firmly. Despite the challenges involved, managers remain resolved to provide the best for all students, including those with very complex needs. The governing body supports and challenges the school well and individual governors are recently becoming more involved with departments. Many staff will appreciate this as they would welcome more contact with governors. The school is a very harmonious community where students get on well together and there is good focus on community cohesion at the local level. Strategic planning to promote it further at the national and international levels, however, is at an early stage of development. Extensive partnerships, including those with parents, with the local college and those which support students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are well used to enhance students' experiences. Safeguarding procedures are good, leading to students and their parents and carers saying that they feel very safe.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Sixth form

The sixth form has improved significantly, moving from a satisfactory position at the previous inspection to a point where provision and outcomes are now good. Close monitoring procedures with regular formal assessment points evaluate students' progress effectively, involving them well in all target setting. They welcome the help and support they receive from staff if achievement flags. Good teaching is founded on thoughtful consideration of which mix of styles and methods will interest and engage students most effectively, and some excellent practice was observed. Unusually, students themselves identify the quality of teaching as the 'unique selling point' of the sixth form. An outstanding history lesson, for instance, prepared students very well for their A2 level exam, with the teacher very skilfully drawing out high quality answers and a 'perfect paragraph' for an exam. A good range of AS/A2 level courses is supplemented by individually tailored provision, for instance for students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. With its partners, the school is planning for innovations such as Diplomas from next year. Students commend the impartial guidance they receive about progression from Year 11 and the help which staff provide about progression routes after school. Sixth form leadership and management are good so morale is excellent and students form strong, positive relationships with staff. Some were concerned that the inspection might disturb their 'very last day' in school, but their fancy dress picnic was clearly much enjoyed.

These are the grades for the sixth form

Overall effectiveness of the sixth form	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were highly positive about the quality of provision and the academic and personal outcomes for their children. An area of concern for a very small minority related to the school's management of unacceptable behaviour, which the inspection team followed up in some detail as a strand of enquiry identified before the inspection. Inspectors found behaviour to be good and that the issue from the previous report about disturbance to learning

from low-level disruption has been resolved. However, discussion with managers shows that they agree with questionnaires which identify the volatile behaviour of a very small minority of students as needing stronger management than some staff provide. Inspectors observed no such behaviour, but senior staff agreed to follow this up further and provide support or other measures to resolve such issues. They feel that with new staff appointments, this type of behaviour is reducing and records of internal exclusions confirm this. A few individual parents expressed concerns about difficulties with matching provision to the needs of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Most relate to a period when the school lacked a special needs coordinator, and in the judgement of inspectors, the school meets such needs well and uses external support partners very effectively.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Edward's Roman Catholic/Church of England School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 204 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 875 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	75	37	120	59	9	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	78	38	122	60	1	0	2	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	74	36	114	56	11	5	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	77	38	101	49	18	9	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	78	38	116	57	7	3	2	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	28	121	59	21	10	1	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	23	137	67	14	7	1	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)	63	31	110	54	13	6	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	69	34	113	55	14	7	3	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	25	120	59	24	12	3	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	19	126	62	21	10	4	2
The school is led and managed effectively	65	32	120	59	11	5	3	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	86	42	102	50	8	4	4	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.



7 June 2010

Dear Students

Inspection of St Edward's Roman Catholic/Church of England School, Poole, BH15 3HY

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school when we came for the inspection. It was a pleasure to be there and I am writing to tell you about our main findings.

Yours is a good school where the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have improved considerably. This is most notable in the sixth form, where provision and progress are now good, so standards are rising. Low-level disruption to lessons from some students' behaviour has also reduced, and we found your behaviour to be good. In general, your progress in most subjects is good and standards are above average by the time you leave the school. We were particularly impressed by your progress in English, and enjoyed many of the activities we saw in lessons. Teaching is good and sometimes excellent. It is pleasing that sixth formers feel that the quality of teaching is the 'unique selling point', making it a good place to study. You and your parents and carers mostly feel that staff look after your welfare very considerately and we agree. We were surprised to find so many of you saying that the school does not help you to keep healthy. You said this in the school's own survey and the school council is now involved trying to find out what more can be done. We feel you can help them to clarify this and improve it

Even in a good school there are things which could make it better and we agree with the school about these. We have asked the school to increase curriculum choices and they plan to do this from next year. We feel that this should include more opportunities for you to learn about and experience cultural diversity in the UK and beyond to help you understand community cohesion better. We feel that some lessons could be better planned to provide different work to stretch faster learners and support slower ones more effectively, so we have asked the school to improve this and the marking of your work, so that comments tell you clearly what to do to improve.

Thank you again

Yours sincerely

Janet Simms

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