

St Edward's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118757
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	339295
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2009
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Dewar-Whalley
Headteacher	Mrs Y Best
Date of previous school inspection	5 January 2007
School address	New Road Sheerness Kent ME12 1BW
Telephone number	01795 662708
Fax number	01795 667261
Email address	office@st-edwards.kent.sch.uk

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

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school, teaching and support staff, parents and pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school improvement plan, systems for tracking the pupils' progress, the strategy to promote community cohesion and 66 parental questionnaires.

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

- whether teaching is sufficiently challenging to raise achievement
- how well the curriculum and extra-curricular activities contribute to outcomes for pupils
- how effectively the leaders and managers at all levels, including the governors, are enabling improvements.

Information about the school

St Edward's is a slightly smaller than average primary school. It has grown in numbers in the last three years, that is since the local authority's arrangements for local schools and age ranges changed significantly. St Edward's was always an all-through primary, but dropped in numbers after Year 4 in the past.

The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and the number with English as an additional language are broadly average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The majority of these pupils have early language or moderate learning difficulties.

The move to a hard federation noted in the last report, with St Peter's School, Sittingbourne, has been completed. There is an executive head of both schools ' and a head of school on each site. The last inspection report, prior to the federation, judged the school to be satisfactory.

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?**3****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

Main findings

Pupils enjoy coming to this satisfactory and rapidly improving school, because they trust the staff, who, they say, are always 'friendly and helpful'. The changes implemented due to the move to a federation with another local school are beginning to bring rewards to all concerned. The school's improvingly positive reputation in the community and better pupil outcomes are due to the hard work of all staff and governors who share the senior staff's values and ambitions for the school. There is now an atmosphere of high expectations. Consequently, the school is well placed to build on its strengths. As one parent observed, 'The school has improved – I was always happy for my children to be at St Edward's – but I am even happier now.'

Accurate self-evaluation has meant the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been enhanced and both are now good. Older pupils with literacy difficulties are now making much better progress in writing, but the school is aware that there is still some work to do to ensure that all pupils are enabled to improve consistently.

The standards reached by the time pupils leave Year 6 are around the national average although lower in writing and with fewer than average achieving at the higher levels. This represents satisfactory progress overall. There is a rising profile of attainment by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 and the rate of progress in these parts of the school is now good. This is also true for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Progress in Key Stage 2 is beginning to speed up and to be more consistent across the classes but this is relatively recent and the improvements have not yet had time to be fully reflected in the attainment of older pupils. As the school has recognised, consistency in the quality of teaching and a more exciting curriculum are now required to raise attainment even further.

The drive and determination of the executive headteacher, head of school and senior leaders have ensured that teaching and learning have improved. There are examples of good or better teaching throughout the school. The school has a wealth of data about individual pupils' performance, which is now in a format that can be easily used by teachers to fine-tune their planning to accelerate learning further. Although this has led to good teaching and learning in some year groups, the quality is not yet consistent across the school. Occasionally, staff do not pick up on pupils' individual responses quickly enough, for instance by asking further questions or giving them feedback, in order to retain their interest or focus their attention. Similarly, although marking is regular and rewards pupils' efforts, it does not always show pupils how they can improve or consistently involve them in the process of getting better. There is also more to do to modify the curriculum to ensure that pupils are consistently provided with

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activities that challenge them, and provide the interesting activities that are seen in some classes.

Another reason that pupils are making better progress overall is that, because of actions taken by the school, they attend more regularly. Their good attendance and happy faces in many lessons and around the school are testimony to this. The school successfully instils in the pupils a strong spiritual, social and moral understanding, which accounts for their good behaviour and positive attitudes to school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Use the school's current monitoring systems to improve the percentage of good teaching by focusing the involvement of senior staff on:
 - improving the pace of lessons in some classes
 - further strengthening day-to-day assessment and marking
 - developing the use of questioning
 - and by extending opportunities for staff to observe the best practice in the school.
- Help pupils embed their learning and skills by: - modifying the curriculum to provide exciting and relevant activities - improving the quality of teacher's daily planning to cater for individual pupils' interests

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

In all lessons observed pupils made satisfactory progress, and in some they made good progress. Pupils are generally well motivated by the ideas and resources presented and are keen to please their teachers and other adults. This is a reflection of the strong moral code of the school that encourages good behaviour, attentiveness and hard work. For example, it was good to see, in a Year 1 lesson, how well pupils listened to the teacher's good questioning, which was well focused on each individual pupil's level of ability. In a Year 6 lesson on rugby skills on the school field, pupils reacted very well when they were given a great deal of freedom to respond in their own way and at their own pace. Pupils generally respond well to opportunities like this, although there are occasional lapses, such as when the pupils are left to sit on the carpet for too long at the beginning of the lesson. Targets set for pupils' progress are suitable and well monitored. A common, and mutually agreed, planning format prompts staff to consider the needs of different groups of pupils, such as those learning English as an additional language and pupils at different ability levels. This helps to focus the work of the excellent additional staff in lessons. In addition, there are very well-targeted additional programmes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Pupils develop into mature young people. They appreciate the good opportunities they have to participate in sporting activities that encourage their positive attitudes to keeping fit and healthy. By the end of Year 6 they are polite and helpful, and are keen to promote the work of the school and to support younger pupils. Taking on roles as school councillors or organising playground games for younger children are some of the ways that they develop and hone their social and personal skills. This, together with

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their good awareness of other cultures and faith groups, good understanding of how to stay safe and average standards in basic skills, means they are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
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	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In the majority of cases, lessons are enjoyable and stimulate pupils' interest well through the imaginative use of resources. Teachers set out clear objectives and sessions are well managed. Pupils experience a good mix of listening to the teacher, responding to questions and opportunities to discuss their work among themselves. This, along with good strategies to manage pupils' behaviour, means that pupils are generally attentive and display good attitudes to learning. Occasionally, the pace of the lesson slows and as a result, pupils become restless and their behaviour worsens.

Teachers' assessment of pupils' learning and progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics is thorough. Staff use this information well to identify pupils who need additional support programmes. Day-to-day assessment is also much improved. This means that group work in lessons is much more closely matched to pupils' individual

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

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needs.

The curriculum has been used well to speed up pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. Now, as one teacher observed, the school's aim is to make learning 'come off the paper and into real life'. The school has placed a very strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills in the last few years. As a result, pupils' achievements in reading and mathematics in particular have risen well. There has been a very well-planned investment in information and communication technology equipment. Although the use of this technology is improving, as a good lesson in Year 6 using a multimedia package showed, there is still some improvement needed. Those pupils with special gifts or talents have individual education plans and are given opportunities in extra-curricular activities but they are given few individual challenges in class or through homework. The school is now developing its curriculum to improve pupils' learning by adding extra relevance and enjoyment. They are in the process of developing a more creative curriculum through topics that provide opportunities for pupils to use and develop their different skills, such as their writing and computer skills, in interesting and more relevant contexts. However, the implementation of this is still in the early stages, and has not yet had time to have a big impact on pupils' learning. The wide range of clubs and activities organised after school is enjoyed and adds significantly to pupils' development and appreciation of school.

The special educational needs coordinator and head of school have a very clear understanding of the individual needs of those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. With their guidance, and the outstanding support of the teaching assistants, staff work hard to provide effectively for these pupils, who are more vulnerable or who find behaving well more difficult.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

The excellent partnership that has developed between the executive headteacher and the head of school is sensitive to all needs. Adults involved in the school value the open-door approach through which managers consistently give an exemplary lead and relate effectively with pupils, parents and the local community. They are now being given great support by the hard-working team of subject leaders. Teamwork is of a good quality. All staff now play a valuable part in moving the school forward. The school administrator, site manager and teaching assistants are considerable assets to the

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school.

There is a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and areas that need more development. The school's self-evaluation is very effective due to the rigorous work of the senior leadership team and governors. This results in a comprehensive, and fully shared, improvement plan that sets out the school's very challenging targets and provides clear guidance for raising standards. The transformation of the governing body in the last two years is one of the most notable, and successful, changes. The governors bring a wide range of skills to their role as critical friends. They hold the school to account by challenging decisions and requesting explanations. Although many coordinators are new to their roles, management at all levels is good because of the staff's enthusiasm and the improved systems to monitor pupils' progress. The rate of these improvements through the federation with another local school shows the school's good capacity for continued development.

The school takes its duty to promote equal opportunities seriously and is effective in this. It values the opinions of parents and pupils and acts upon these. Procedures to safeguard pupils' well-being, safety and health are rigorous and all members of staff are well trained. The contribution the school makes to community cohesion is satisfactory. A plan and clear actions are in place for promoting pupils' understanding from a local perspective. Links with other schools, especially in the federation, and agencies are harnessed very well. The need to expand its links to provide a national and global perspective is well understood by the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
	3
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	3
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
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

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

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Children enter the Reception class with low levels of language and personal development skills. The huge level of commitment and care shown by all Early Years Foundation Stage staff is evident in the way that all children settle into the school so well and immediately begin to learn, despite coming from so many different backgrounds. At the start of the day, the children enter the classes with confidence and settle swiftly to purposeful activities. At this early start of their education they are already happy to talk and share ideas with each other and the adults.

The school has created effective monitoring on entry with systematic tracking of progress in response to the early learning goals and immediate partnership with parents. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from early diagnosis with provision of speech therapy or support in language delay. There is an outstanding response to early singing and phonics. Despite the fact that children start with standards that are often very low, they make markedly good progress particularly in communication, language and emergent literacy skills. There is a good and appropriate focus on children's personal, social and emotional development to enhance all-round achievement in all six areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage learning through very well organised indoor and outdoor play. Self-esteem and a sense of community are evident in class routines such as the start and completion of activities, and story sharing. Very good partnership between all adults promotes effective welfare and outstanding day-to-day assessment. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage by the coordinator are excellent and have enabled the significant improvement since the last inspection. Rigorous systems for planning, recording and moderating children's achievement promote learning very well and ensure continuity to Year 1 across the areas of learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Edward's Catholic Primary 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 66 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 187 pupils registered at the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	58	26	39	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	48	33	50	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	41	33	50	5	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	27	41	33	50	6	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	50	26	39	5	8	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	39	31	47	1	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	39	32	48	6	9	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)	23	35	32	49	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	38	38	56	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	22	33	35	53	7	11	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	33	35	53	7	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	45	29	44	4	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	50	30	46	2	3	0	0

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



21 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Edward's Catholic Primary School, Sheerness, ME12 1BW

Thank you for making us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed seeing how you work in your lessons, and sharing your assemblies, lunch and play times. We also enjoyed talking to your parents and reading their questionnaires. We worked very closely with your headteachers. We also spent time talking to some of your teachers and governors and looking at your work.

As a result of our inspection we have judged your school to be satisfactory, and improving. We were pleased to see how the school has got so much better since its last inspection. You are doing better in your studies and reaching higher standards. Children in the Reception class now get off to a good start at the school. We saw how much you enjoyed many of your lessons. We were particularly pleased to see that you usually behave well in lessons and in the playground, as this has improved. We were impressed by your very good behaviour in assembly and at lunchtimes.

The school quite rightly has lots of plans for what it needs to improve next. We have asked the headteachers to make sure that you are all given the best opportunities to learn no matter which class you are in. We know your teachers are all working hard to be the best they can and we want them to learn from each other as well. We have asked your teachers to think hard about how they can make all the subjects you learn interesting and as close as possible to what you need to learn.

A number of you said we were welcome back any time, which was lovely to hear. We did enjoy our time with you. Thank you again for your help and please pass on our thanks to all the adults who helped us too.

Yours faithfully

David Marshall

Lead Inspector

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