

# St Edmund's Community Foundation School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120876
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	339799
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 July 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Godfrey Bancroft

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Foundation
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	177
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Derrick Murphy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ms Lisa Cook
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Kilhams Way Kings Lynn Norfolk
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<b>Email address</b>	office@st-edumnds.norfolk.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 14 lessons, taught by nine teachers. Inspectors held meeting with pupils, staff and with members of the governing body. They observed the school's work and looked at assessment information, a range of policy documents, including those concerned with health and safety and the school's plans for future improvement. They also looked at 24 responses to parental questionnaires.

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

- the actions taken to maintain the pattern of improving progress and the impact on attainment
- the impact of actions taken to promote better attendance
- the effectiveness of arrangements to meet the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the impact of the governing body on the work of the school.

## Information about the school

The school is a little smaller than the average for primary schools. Children of Nursery and Reception age are taught together in an Early Years Foundation Stage Unit. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is much higher than found nationally. The proportion of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups and the percentage known to be from homes where English is not the first language is relatively low. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very high and made up mainly of pupils who have moderate learning difficulties or emotional and behavioural difficulties. Within this group the proportion having a statement of special educational needs is broadly average. The school has Healthy Schools status and been awarded Activemark and Artsmark.

**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

The school is providing a satisfactory quality of education and is emerging successfully from a period of instability in respect of its governance, leadership and staffing. It is now in a much stronger position to move forward with effective leadership, a settled staffing structure and a new governing body. While a number of parents express concerns about aspects of the schools performance, others are very pleased with the quality of education it provides. One parent said, 'My daughter really enjoys school. The teachers and teaching assistants are very helpful.' Another commented, 'The school is excellent for my child. He is doing very well.' Such comments support the views expressed by many of the pupils.

Standards have been, with some variations, stubbornly low for several years, but there are clear signs of improvement. Attainment by the end of Year 2 is low, although the current group of pupils is firmly on course to do better than those in previous years. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6 attainment is still low. Inspection evidence found that the progress of the majority of pupils accelerates in Years 3 to 6 and they are now achieving well. Arrangements to support the learning and progress of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are good and these pupils achieve well. The school has successfully created a very supportive learning environment for pupils who display challenging behaviour. The progress of some pupils is being helped by their improved attendance. However, attendance remains well below average and this restricts the learning and progress of those who do not attend regularly.

Current strategies for improving pupils' progress in English and mathematics are proving to be successful and standards are starting to rise. Even so, opportunities to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills are sometimes missed and occasionally questions are not targeted specifically to build on pupils' prior knowledge. Similarly, teachers do not always link developments in pupils' speaking and listening to help them make enough progress in their writing. In this respect opportunities to break learning down and structure writing activities into easily manageable chunks are also sometimes missed. At other times, during mathematics lessons, not enough attention is given to the promotion of pupils' basic mental and oral skills.

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory, but the progress of some children is slow because the development of their personal and social skills is not structured sufficiently well. Subsequent steps in some children's learning are not always matched closely enough the stage they have reached in their development. Similarly, when children use the outdoor learning environment planned activities are not always linked closely enough to their indoor learning experiences and sometimes they receive insufficient guidance to help them progress.

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Procedures to evaluate the performance of the school are rigorous and accurate. The leadership and staff have worked effectively to reduce instances of unacceptable behaviour, which helps pupils to apply themselves much better in lessons. In turn the pattern of good progress is now firmly in place with clear signs during lessons and in pupils' work that it will be sustained. When coupled with the effective leadership of the headteacher and the increasingly influential role of the governing body, a strong indication is given that the school's capacity to sustain improvement in the future is good.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Build on the strategies currently in place to further improve pupils' progress in English and mathematics by:
  - making full use of opportunities to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills through the use of questions to extend their thinking and build on their prior learning
  - increasing the number of structured opportunities for pupils to use their basic skills for writing during English and, where appropriate, in other subjects
  - making sure that the development of pupils' mental and oral mathematical skills is a feature of all mathematics lessons.
- Improve the rate of progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - focussing more precisely on the development of their personal and social skills so they are better placed to benefit from the available learning opportunities
  - ensuring that activities are closely matched to the stage that each child has reached in their learning
  - making more effective use of outdoor learning opportunities by providing children with the guidance they need to learn successfully, and building on their indoor learning.
- Maintain the drive to improve pupils' attendance.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, building on the work undertaken in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The work seen in Key Stage 2 books and their progress during lessons indicates that the majority of pupils make good progress. Pupils are eager to answer questions and respond thoughtfully. The quality of their writing also shows signs of improvement. Among those making good progress are those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those pupils who are known to be entitled to free school meals. Central to these developments are improvements in pupils' behaviour.

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Instances of unacceptable behaviour have reduced significantly, enabling pupils to enjoy their learning. Pupils are also taking far greater responsibility for their own actions and resolving conflicts for themselves. In this respect the opportunities for pupils to discuss concerns and tensions amongst themselves and with adults are proving to be very effective.

Pupils are well informed about how to stay safe, but some remain concerned about the behaviour of others. They recognise the need to eat healthily and enjoy exercise, although too few take the opportunity to participate in the good range of additional physical activities that the school provides. Pupils are making a satisfactory contribution to the school community. This is typified by their increasing willingness to take responsibility for their behaviour and to do jobs around the school, but still too few join in school events and activities. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Many pupils are becoming increasingly reflective and showing greater understanding for the needs of others. Their singing in assemblies is excellent.

Pupils acquire the basic skills they will need in the future, such as communication and computer skills satisfactorily. Despite the school's best efforts attendance remains stubbornly well below average. This is mainly because a number of parents do not do enough to make sure their children attend.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4

<sup>1</sup> 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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<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>
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## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory, although good teaching in Years 4, 5 and 6 ensures that progress accelerates and pupils achieve well. In these lessons there is effective use of discussions with and between pupils and this focus is clearly paying dividends. However, in some lessons opportunities are missed to extend learning and challenge pupils through carefully focussed questioning. At other times the approach to developing pupils' writing is not structured into small enough sections for pupils to manage easily. In some mathematics lessons there is not enough emphasis on developing pupils' essential mental and oral skills. That said, pupils are becoming increasingly well motivated learners with the majority of lessons typified by enjoyable activities and good relationships between pupils and adults. Pupils' progress is assessed accurately and the information gained from assessments is used appropriately on a day to day basis to plan the next stages of learning. The use of assessment information by senior managers to identify and respond to trends in attainment and progress for different groups of pupils is good. This is particularly true for pupils who have special educational needs who receive effective personal support, crucially in the development of their reading.

The curriculum is matched appropriately to pupils' needs and abilities and good attention is rightly paid to their personal and social development. Ways of linking pupils' learning across different subjects are currently being trialled and will be introduced fully when pupils return after the summer holidays. The development of pupils' basic skills across the curriculum is satisfactory. Additional activities, such as the visit to a residential centre for pupils in Year 5 make an effective contribution to their personal and social development. The school provides some interesting after-school clubs, such as power kiting, drumming and a good range of sports activities. However, too few pupils are motivated to attend and numbers are often low.

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff have detailed knowledge and are very aware of pupils' personal circumstances and of the challenges that they face each day. Pupils are very appreciative of the support they receive and are confident that the school will do all it can to help them overcome any difficulties they might face.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

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The promotion of equality of opportunity for all and the elimination of discrimination are at the heart of the school's work and it does this successfully. The strong leadership of the headteacher and a settled staffing structure are bringing significant improvements to many aspects of the school's work. The evaluation of the quality of education is rigorous and accurate. As a result planning for future developments is precise and clearly targeted at the most crucial areas for improvement. For example, the use of assessment data by the headteacher and senior managers to identify shortfalls in progress, respond to pupils needs and to set realistic yet challenging targets for attainment and progress is good. The management of teaching and learning is satisfactory with senior leaders looking closely at ways of bringing further improvement and staff working together to support each other.

The governing body are nearly all recent appointments. They represent the interests of the community well, are enthusiastic advocates for the school's work and have an excellent range of skills. Their knowledge of how well the school is operating and what it needs to do to improve is developing rapidly, but they have not been in post long enough to influence the work of the school significantly. That said, they have worked closely with the headteacher to approach the difficult task of reducing a significant deficit budget and ensuring that good use is made of the available resources. The governing body fulfils its duties in respect of health and safety well. Arrangements to ensure that pupils are as safe as can reasonably be expected are good. Staff training is fully up to date and policies are reviewed regularly. Together with the headteacher, the governing body are helping to ensure that the school works closely with partners and support agencies to promote learning and well-being. For example, close liaison with social services, the police, the local council and the local authority are bringing benefits for pupils and helping the school to become a focal point for the community it serves. Communication between school and parents and carers is of good quality. There is a dedicated parent's room and parents and carers appreciate the guidance they receive about how to support their children's learning. However, a significant proportion of parents are still proving hard to reach despite the school's best efforts.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>



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<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The majority of children start school with attainment that is low in relation to that expected for their age, particularly in their personal and social development and in their language and communication skills. During their time in the unit most make satisfactory progress and join Year 1 with standards that are low when compared to the expectations for their age.

The majority of children settle in quickly, although a few have very poor personal and social skills and find it hard to play and work with others or sustain their interest in activities. Some of the best progress is evident in the way children acquire an understanding of numbers. When they use computers they show great enthusiasm, sustain their interest and are eager to share and explain what they doing. They also make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening, although opportunities to promote children's communication skills are sometimes missed. For example, while there is a good balance between adult-led activities and those which children choose for themselves, staff do not always intervene promptly enough to give children the guidance they need to develop their skills further. At times, particularly when playing outside, children are left to their own devices for too long and there are not enough opportunities for them to answer questions and to talk about what they are doing. That said, because of the good guidance they receive and the carefully structured approach to developing their early writing skills, many children progress well in this aspect of their learning. Good progress is also noted in children's physical development and in this respect the outdoor learning area is used well, although what children do when outdoors is not always linked closely enough to their indoor learning.

Children's progress is assessed accurately. However, the information gained from assessments is not always used to precisely match activities to the stage that children have reached and in a minority of cases this results in progress slowing down.

### *These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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## Views of parents and carers

The few parents and carers who returned the questionnaire indicated several areas of concern, mainly that their children make insufficient progress; the school does not deal effectively with instances of unacceptable behaviour; the school does not take account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors looked into these matters but found no evidence to support the concerns.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Edmund's Community Foundation 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 24 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 177 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	13	54	8	33	3	13	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	10	42	10	42	3	13	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	8	33	11	46	2	8	2	8
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	46	8	33	5	21	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	10	42	14	58	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	10	42	14	58	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	38	14	58	1	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)	9	38	15	63	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	33	15	63	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	17	10	42	9	38	1	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	3	13	14	58	6	25	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	4	17	14	58	3	13	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	7	29	14	58	1	4	2	8

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



15 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Edmund's Community Foundation School, Kings Lynn, PE30 2HU

I would like to start by thanking you for telling me about your school and for showing me your work when I visited recently to carry out the inspection. I was pleased to hear that many of you enjoy school and appreciate the help you get. Your school is improving rapidly. Your progress is getting better all the time, as is your behaviour. It is good that more of you are taking responsibility for your behaviour and sorting out problems for yourself. Well done. I must say I was very impressed by your singing in assembly and by the drumming of those of you who attend the after-school club.

Overall your school gives you a satisfactory quality of education. Your headteacher, staff and governing body are working well to improve your school. With this in mind and as result of the inspection I have asked them to:

- provide you with even more help to develop your speaking and listening, writing and mental and oral mathematical skills
- to look closely at how they help the youngest children to learn in the Early Years Foundation Stage unit

You can all play your part in helping the school to improve by attending as regularly as you can and by joining in with the clubs and additional activities the school provides for you.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Godfrey Bancroft

Lead inspector

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