

St Edward's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122047
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	340078
Inspection dates	14–15 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Carol Worthington

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	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Hill
Headteacher	Nicola Vaughan
Date of previous school inspection	16 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 10 lessons and all seven class teachers were seen. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, governors, and two groups of pupils. Many pupils were informally spoken to. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at records of assessments of pupils' attainment, tracking of their progress and samples of their work in books. All safeguarding documents were scrutinised. Questionnaire returns from 70 parents and carers were analysed, as were those from 20 staff and 116 Key Stage 2 pupils.

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

- whether high standards of attainment are being consistently maintained throughout the school
- how consistently teachers' day-to-day assessment, marking and target setting is being used throughout the school to bring about good progress for all groups of pupils
- how well information and communication technology (ICT) skills are developed in all areas of the curriculum
- how effectively systems for monitoring and evaluation have established consistently good teaching and learning throughout the school.

Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British origin, with the remaining 22% from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A small number of these pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is similar to that in most schools. Most of these have moderate learning, emotional, behavioural or speech and language difficulties. A few have a degree of autism. Very few have statements of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The school has Healthy Schools status and the Active Mark 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Edward's is a good school. It has improved considerably since its last inspection, when it was judged to be satisfactory. This is because the headteacher has been successful in communicating her vision for improvement, so the whole staff shares in this ambition. School leaders have a good grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work well together as a highly committed and motivated team.

Effective systems for monitoring teaching and learning have improved the quality of teaching, which is now good. The use of a comprehensive system for tracking pupils' progress has enabled the school to identify and address underachievement quickly. As a result, all pupils achieve well. Challenging targets are met, and pupils of higher ability often exceed them. By the end of Key stage 2, pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science, making good progress from their starting points.

Teachers plan lessons effectively to meet the needs of all the pupils in their classes. Their day-to-day marking and assessment are good, and often involve pupils in checking their own learning. However, pupils are given too little opportunity to carry out independent research activities on topics that interest them, particularly those which would improve their information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, provision is good. However, children do not have enough learning activities that they can investigate and explore independently in the outdoor area. Nor is there enough access to wheeled toys such as tricycles.

Pupils' behaviour is good and underpinned by well-established routines, followed by all staff and understood by all pupils. They come to school punctually, but their attendance has fallen to average since the previous inspection, largely due to parents who take their children away for holidays during term time.

Christian values underpin the school's ethos and enable pupils to gain a clear perspective on life from which to compare and respect other people's feelings and values. Spiritual development is excellent. Older pupils think deeply about their own experiences and show great concern for others. Pastoral care is good, so pupils feel safe and well cared-for because they know they have someone to talk to, if they have problems. Incidents of bullying and harassment are minimal and are quickly dealt with should they occur.

The school aims to develop the whole child, and prepares its pupils well for life in their next school and beyond. Their social skills are highly developed, together with a strong sense of belonging to the school community and their place in it. They willingly take on posts of responsibility as sports leaders or as members of the school council. Pupils gain knowledge of a wide range of cultures through religious education, and through

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celebrating the mix of cultures present in the school.

Since the previous inspection, there have been many improvements in leadership, teaching, learning and assessment, which have impacted positively on pupils' progress. Effective self-evaluation identifies areas for development and measures are put in to bring about improvement. The school is now well placed to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' acquisition of ICT skills by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their learning in subjects across the curriculum
 - providing facilities for more spontaneous access to computers in every classroom.
- Develop curriculum provision by:
 - making use of enjoyable and relevant cross-curricular themes to motivate pupils to carry out extended research projects which help to develop their independent learning skills
 - provide more outdoor activities that Reception children can investigate and explore on their own and which allow them to learn through play.
- Make sure that parents fully understand the adverse effects on their child's education caused by removing them from school for long periods

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The vast majority of pupils achieve well in this school. Attainment has risen sharply since the school's last inspection, and has been maintained at above average levels ever since. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get extra support to help them to access learning. Those who are learning English as an additional language are given specialist support using carefully chosen materials. Writing is a great strength of the school. Pupils in Year 5, for example, eloquently expressed powerful emotions about love and loss in their writing after watching a thought provoking film, showing themselves equal to the task of reflecting deeply on another's feelings. Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress in lessons, and are becoming adept at assessing their own progress towards their individual targets. However, their books show that opportunities for them to complete individual project work, particularly using computers, are limited.

Pupils are happy in school. They enjoy their learning, particularly in practical subjects, such as art, drama and music, where they get the opportunity to express themselves creatively. They work well together in class, where their good attitudes have a positive impact on their learning. Relationships develop particularly well through dedicated 'R-time' lessons, where pupils learn to work with different partners for every activity. Pupils have good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, at an appropriate level for their age. They know what they must do to lead a healthy lifestyle; there is a good

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take up of sporting clubs and activities and pupils choose healthy food at break times.

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	2
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?

Teaching is good, and results in good learning and progress. Some outstanding teaching and learning was seen in Reception and Year 6 during the inspection. Teachers plan effectively for the differing range of abilities in their classes, and use teaching assistants well to support and guide the work of all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language. Marking is good and gives pupils good guidance on the next steps of learning. The curriculum is well organised and individual subjects are given sufficient time for development by being taught discretely, but there are few cross-curricular themes to excite pupils' imagination and develop independent learning, for example, through projects. ICT is taught as a discrete subject, but its use in the wider curriculum is not well developed. The wide range of extra curricular clubs in sport, music, arts and crafts is popular and includes residential visits to Wales and the Peak District. These enable pupils to develop independence and experience life in a very different setting to their

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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own.

Pastoral care is good, so pupils feel well cared-for; they know adults will listen to them if they have problems, and advise them well. Despite the school's many efforts to dissuade them, some parents persist in taking their children away for extended holidays in term time. Pupils and their parents are given good guidance when they start school, and again, in preparation for secondary education. Pupils leave for a wide variety of secondary schools well prepared spiritually and academically for future life. The school gives good support to pupils and their families who find themselves in vulnerable circumstances.

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?

The headteacher has successfully led the school's good improvement since its previous inspection, well supported by the governing body and senior staff. The very comprehensive system for tracking pupils' progress effectively focuses on improving the attainment of all groups of pupils. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning has ensured that this is now good, though teachers do not plan enough opportunities to develop their pupils as independent learners.

The governing body is highly committed to the school, has good knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses and is very supportive of the changes initiated by the headteacher. Governors are rigorous in ensuring that all procedures for safeguarding pupils and staff are up to date and take into account developing technologies such as the internet.

School leaders are vigilant in monitoring the deployment of staff and resources to make sure all pupils get equal opportunity to access the curriculum and take part in all school activities. The rigorous analysis of the attendance, behaviour and academic outcomes of different groups, including, girls, boys, those learning English as a second language, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are gifted and talented, is a strong feature of the school's management. As a result, any significant differences are quickly picked up and appropriate measures for improvement are quickly put in place.

The school is a cohesive community where everyone is valued and the increasing mix of cultures celebrated. The unifying influence of the Roman Catholic ethos is apparent in all aspects of school life and in its strong links with the church and parish. Productive

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partnerships with local schools enhance the curriculum, particularly for sport. The school has strong links with a community in the Peak District, which pupils compare with their own before undertaking residential visits. Through work with CAFOD (The Catholic Agency for Overseas Development), pupils have good opportunities to gain a good understanding about the lives of people in communities overseas.

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
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children usually enter Reception with skills and knowledge that were generally in line with their ages, except in early literacy and some aspects of numeracy, which are below. They make good progress, and by the time they enter Year 1, virtually all have attained the early learning goals. In the current Reception class, a large proportion has exceeded the goals; many have made excellent progress from their starting points. Attainment in all areas is rapidly rising. This reflects the good, and often outstanding, quality of teaching and learning in lessons.

Children make very good progress in reading and writing because of well focused daily sessions. The top group demonstrate writing of high quality because there are many 'fun' activities, such as stocktaking in their 'shop', to reinforce it. Early mathematics skills develop as children enjoy combining 'ice cream cones' with 'scoops of ice cream,' finding out how many different combinations they can make. There are warm relationships between adults and children, so children are confident and settle happily to individual activities, for instance, with bricks and musical instruments. Children behave well; their social skills are good and enhanced by 'R-time' (relationship time). This provides a firm foundation for the good behaviour seen in the rest of the school.

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There is a well-equipped learning environment indoors, but that outdoors is more sparse, and opportunities for 'free flow' activities are limited. Children enjoy adult-led activities such as helping to build an obstacle course, but opportunities for independent learning through activities with sand, water and riding wheeled vehicles are not as extensive.

Good leadership ensures good planning and highly effective use of assessment to ensure that activities are matched well to the different abilities of the children. Their individual 'learning journeys' are outstandingly well recorded using an electronic tracking system. The safety and care of all children has a very high profile. Good relationships with parents and carers extend children's learning into their homes.

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	2

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned completed questionnaires were very positive about the school. All those who responded to the questionnaire said they know their children are safe in school. Most thought their children enjoy school. They were pleased with the quality of teaching, but a few felt they could have more information about their child's progress. Some parents thought the school could deal more effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors agree with the positive comments. They found the school does as much as most schools to inform parents about progress. Inspectors observed good behaviour in the school. Although there are one or two pupils who sometimes exhibit unacceptable behaviour, this is very quickly dealt with, and pupils themselves agree that their learning is not disrupted.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

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 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 70 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 209 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	40	57	29	41	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	60	28	40	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	30	43	35	50	4	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	46	34	49	2	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	34	49	43	49	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	51	31	44	2	3	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	37	53	29	41	3	4	1	1
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)	28	40	36	51	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	40	37	53	2	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	39	34	49	5	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	34	40	57	2	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	40	57	26	37	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	51	32	46	1	1	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

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.



16 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Edward's Catholic Primary School, Northamptonshire, NN15 6PT

Thank you very much for being so helpful, polite and courteous to my colleagues and I during our visit. We agree with you that your school is good.

Your headteacher and governing body do a good job in running the school. You make good progress in learning. The standard of your work is good, but we think your curriculum could be made more interesting and you could become more independent learners, by doing more projects involving research. We also think you could use computers more often.

Most of you behave well, and come to school wanting to learn. This helps you make the most of your school days and be well prepared for your secondary education. You told us that bullying is rare and quickly dealt with, and we agree with you. Adults take good care of you and you said you can always talk to someone, if you are worried. You know how to keep yourselves healthy and safe, and you all do useful jobs in school. A few of your parents take you away for long holidays in term time, which prevents you from making as good progress as you should.

All the adults in your school want it to be even better. To make this happen I have asked them to do the following things:

- make the curriculum more interesting by planning exciting themes that you can explore through your own research projects
- develop your computer skills by using ICT regularly in other subjects
- provide more activities in the outdoor area in the Early Years Foundation Stage for children to get on with by themselves
- ask your parents to think carefully about the effect on your education before taking you away from school in term time.

Yours sincerely

Carol Worthington

Lead inspector

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