

St Edward's CofE (C) First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124241
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	340523
Inspection dates	10–11 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Gerald Griffin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	248
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Lawrence Price
Headteacher	Mrs Tracy Ward
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Three-quarters of the time in school was spent observing learning. The inspectors visited 19 lessons taught by 11 teachers. They joined an assembly, observed break times, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work, progress records, teachers' lesson plans, school improvement plans, policies and reports. They met several parents and carers, analysed 67 pupils' questionnaires, 22 staff questionnaires, 90 parents' questionnaires, and undertook a case study of several pupils whose circumstances have the potential to make them vulnerable. It looked in detail at the following:

the progress made by girls in Key Stage 1

- learning and progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2
- the quality of the challenge that teachers provide to secure good progress
- the effectiveness of leaders' plans to accelerate progress and promote higher attainment.

Information about the school

Nearly all pupils at St Edward's come from White British families. A small number of pupils come from Polish families and few of them do not speak English at home as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The school has recently gained a number of awards including Healthy Schools, Artsmark Gold, Activemark. The school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a Nursery class and two Reception classes. The privately run St. Edward's Nursery and Out of School Club operates from the site and will be inspected separately.

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 provides a good quality of education within a very safe, welcoming and caring atmosphere. Parents are very pleased with the quality of education that the school provides. Typically, one parent wrote, 'My son loves to come to school and work in the school's supportive and caring environment. He is doing so well thanks to motivated teachers and a headteacher who wants the very best for the school.'

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception, where they make good progress in all the areas of learning. This good progress continues in Years 1 to 4 and by the time pupils' move to middle school, their attainment is above average. Since the last inspection, the school has sustained pupils' good progress and improved this in reading at Key Stage 2, where it is outstanding. The school has experienced some staffing difficulties recently during which progress in mathematics at Key Stage 2 slowed. Now that staffing is more stable, the school has successfully tackled this problem. Progress in mathematics is now accelerating and pupils are on track to meet their challenging targets. This leadership record, together with its accurate self-evaluation, shows the school's good capacity for continued improvement.

Most aspects of pupils' personal development are good. They feel very safe in school and do their best to keep healthy. Pupils behave well. They have positive attitudes towards learning and enjoy school. However, pupils' attendance is average because some of them miss too many days because the school allows some parents take them on holidays during term time. The school's progress data shows that these pupils often make slower progress than those who attend regularly.

The good teaching enables pupils to make good gains in their learning. Teachers use resources, such as computers, to make work interesting and relevant. The work they plan matches closely the needs of pupils and so ensures that they are challenged well. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows during a lesson, typically when instructions lack clarity or when the teacher does not spot quickly enough that pupils, who are working independently, need help. The lively and interesting curriculum supports good learning and adds to pupils' enjoyment of school. Staff use their detailed knowledge of each child skilfully to provide a good level of care and personal support.

The staff enthusiastically share the headteacher's clearly articulated drive to improve the school. Middle leadership is good and middle leaders are now taking responsibility for standards in their areas. Although leaders track pupils' progress carefully, they do not always use this information well to judge the success of their planned actions for improvement and to identify areas in need of further development to accelerate pupils' progress so that it is even better.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Maintain a consistently good pace of learning throughout lessons by:
 - ensuring that instructions about what pupils need to do are always clear
 - routinely checking if pupils need help with their work.
- Reduce the number of family holidays allowed in term time to raise the attendance rate to secure better progress.
- Sharpen school improvement by ensuring that leaders use data more effectively to check the success of its plans to raise attainment and progress, and to identify where further improvements to learning can be secured.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The learning seen during the inspection was good across the school. For example, pupils in a Key Stage 1 mathematics lesson were making good progress in subtracting numbers. Pupils enjoyed the lesson because they found the work interesting and relevant. They worked hard because each was challenged well by their tasks. Year 3 were making good gains in their learning about Ancient Greek history. Pupils were skilfully researching information and using computers to share and develop ideas with their classmates using the school 'blog'. They were also challenged well. They were fascinated by the facts they discovered and made good gains in their information and communication technology skills.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enjoy learning and their achievement is good. Girls' progress at Key Stage 1, which was slower than that of the boys' last year, has accelerated and is now good. This is because teachers have boosted girls' self-confidence by celebrating their successes, for example when answering questions and in sports such as rugby. Pupils who do not speak English as their first language also make good progress.

Bullying is almost unheard of and the rare cases are quickly resolved. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe, for example when crossing the road. They take plenty of exercise and eat a healthy diet, which is confirmed by St Edward's Healthy School and Activemark awards. They are keen to take responsibility, for example as monitors and as members of the school council. Pupils collect generously for charity and enthusiastically participate in local church and village activities. Although pupils' attendance is average, their above average basic skills and positive attitudes towards learning mean that their preparation for middle school is good overall.

Pupils reflect maturely on their feelings. Their good behaviour is founded on a strong moral code. Occasionally, pupils lose concentration and fidget if they are not sure what to do next. Pupils work together well in teams and readily help each other. While pupils respect others from backgrounds different to their own, their understanding of the diversity of British culture is a relative weakness. Actions are in place to tackle this.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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?

In lessons, relationships are very positive. Teachers ask challenging questions and use the answers well to check pupils' understanding before moving on to more difficult work. Lessons typically proceed at a demanding pace but, sometimes, learning slows when pupils are not entirely sure about what the teacher's instructions mean or when the teacher does not spot quickly that they are stuck and need help. Marking and other feedback gives pupils a clear understanding of how they can improve their work. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to learning, especially for those with pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils learning English as a second language.

The good curriculum supports pupils' personal development well, for example through the many opportunities to reflect on feelings during lively assemblies. There are now good opportunities at Key Stage 2 for pupils to practise calculating and solving mathematical problems; previously the weaker areas of learning. The very good standard of the many displays of art around the school confirms its Artsmark award. St Edward's works in close partnership with the middle and high schools. This ensures a smooth transition to the next stage of pupils' education and provides specialist teaching in subjects such as art and music. The many educational visits, visitors to school and Spanish lessons add to pupils' enjoyment of school and help to broaden horizons. Most pupils participate in the wide range of after school clubs that raise aspirations.

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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Pupils confidently approach an adult with any worries, knowing their concerns will be quickly resolved. The school's targeted support for its small number of vulnerable pupils is very effective. One carer told an inspector that the school keeps in touch with her on a daily basis to ensure the child's welfare and learning needs are sympathetically met. The school's support for pupils learning English as a second language, while good, is not regularly informed by outside experts in this field of provision to ensure it is of the highest possible standard. Apart from this, the school works well with outside agencies to support the learning and welfare of pupils, especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school procedures to check attendance are good and the proportion of pupils who miss school without permission is below the national figure. However, the school too readily allows parents to withdraw their child from school for holidays during term time, knowing this often adversely affects pupils' progress.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leaders set the school challenging targets. Governors support the school well and challenge it robustly over its performance. This is helped by their growing understanding of data. However, the school's leadership does not use progress data consistently well to judge the success of improvement plans. Training to sharpen staff's skills in planning work that meets the needs of girls at Key Stage 1 and teaching mathematics at Key Stage 2 has resulted in notable improvements.

The school places a high priority on safety and safeguarding. Child protection procedures are robust, regularly updated and fully meet current safeguarding requirements. The checks that the school makes on the suitability of adults to work with children and pupils are rigorous. The success of the school's action to promote equality is evident in the way it has tackled some previous gender inequalities.

The school has evaluated its religious, ethnic and socio-economic context thoroughly, and the contribution it makes to community cohesion is satisfactory. The work it has undertaken in helping families to support their child's education at home is having a positive impact in school, which is a happy and harmonious community. The school is planning links with local schools with diverse ethnic intakes to improve pupils' insight into communities that are different to their own.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

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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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start school at the expected levels for their age. Many reach above average standards by the time they start Year 1. Boys and girls make similarly good progress. Children's personal development is good. They behave well, readily share apparatus and are polite to each other and to adults. Parents are very pleased with the way they are kept informed about their child's progress and the guidance they are given as to how they can help their child learn at home.

Learning is good. For example, children were thoroughly engrossed in making pancakes, learning to follow a sequence of instructions accurately and how to mix ingredients. Teachers plan an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. However, the outdoor area is under utilised to develop learning and to promote children's independence. Occasionally, children's learning slows when adults do not move them quickly enough onto the next stage of their learning. Children are very safe in the indoor classroom and outside learning area and are cared for very well.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Detailed assessments of each child's progress are used well to plan their learning. Training is quickly improving the Early Years Foundation Stage teaching skills of adults working in the setting.

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

Many parents added positive comments in the inspection questionnaires about how much their children enjoyed school, the good progress they are making and the school's supportive leadership. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. Several parents of children in Reception wrote about concerns they have about overcrowding in the small play area at break times, which could lead to accidents. Inspectors scrutinised accident reports and can reassure parents that accidents are rare and that supervision in the playground is appropriate. However, on hearing of these concerns, the school immediately arranged to stagger break times for Reception children so that playtime is less congested. A few parents said that the school does not take their views into account. Inspectors found that the school does its very best to accommodate parents' wishes and this is confirmed by the response outlined above. A few parents feel that the school does not deal with unacceptable behaviour effectively. Inspectors found behaviour management to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Edward's CofE (C) First 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 90 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 248 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	71	22	24	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	61	68	27	30	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	46	51	37	41	4	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	47	40	44	4	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	58	35	39	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	45	50	37	41	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	50	38	42	3	3	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)	44	49	34	38	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	48	53	36	40	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	36	43	48	6	7	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	41	39	43	6	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	52	58	30	33	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	62	29	32	2	2	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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.



12 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Edward's CofE (C) First School, Leek, ST13 7HP

Thank you for being so polite and friendly when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit and having the opportunity to talk to some of you and to see you in lessons and at play. You are rightly proud of the school's happy atmosphere in which you all get on so well together. St Edward's is a good school. Here are some of the things we found out.

Your teachers ensure that you get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception.

You enjoy school and feel very safe and secure.

You make good progress in Years 1 to 4.

You try your best to eat a healthy diet and take plenty of exercise.

Your behaviour is good.

You have good relationships with your teachers and you try hard for them.

The curriculum provides you with exciting clubs and visits, which you enjoy.

Adults look after you well and are always ready to help you.

The headteacher and staff are working hard to make the school get better.

We have asked the school to do three things to help you do even better in your learning.

Make sure teachers always make clear what they want you to do and to give you help quickly if you get stuck so that you get a lot done in lessons.

Improve the attendance of those of you who do not attend well enough so that you make better progress.

Make sure those in charge use the information on your learning and progress to check whether the school is doing well enough.

You can help the school by continuing to try your best in lessons and behaving well.

I wish you all success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Gerald Griffin

Lead inspector

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