

St Edmunds RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135307
Local Authority	Salford
Inspection number	341633
Inspection dates	3–4 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Jim Kidd

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	396
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr Leo Heakin
Headteacher	Mrs Claire Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed every teacher in the teacher's classroom, visited 18 lessons and spent around half of the allotted time observing pupils' learning. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, school leaders, teaching and support staff, groups of pupils and the School Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's development plan, information on the progress of vulnerable pupils and internal monitoring files on pupils' attainment and progress. Inspectors analysed 146 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, 98 returned by pupils and 21 returned by staff.

- the impact of the school's strategies to improve pupils' attainment in English and particularly in writing
- the effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve pupils' attendance
- challenge in the classroom and whether it is high enough to encourage all pupils to aim for higher standards
- the accuracy and effectiveness of assessment to provide challenging targets for pupils and to ensure that they are aware of how to improve their work
- the quality of leadership and self-evaluation at all levels to ensure ongoing improvement in this relatively new school
- the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

This larger-than-average school opened in a new building in September 2008, the result of an amalgamation of three primary schools from two separate parishes. The headteacher has only been in post since January of this year and she leads a relatively new senior leadership team. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is twice the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Most pupils are of White British heritage and few speak English as an additional language. St Edmunds has Healthy Schools accreditation and holds the Activemark for its work in physical education.

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

3

Main findings

St Edmunds is an improving school which provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Pupils behave well and they have a keen understanding of what makes a balanced diet and just why keeping fit is important to their everyday lives. They are actively involved in supporting a variety of charities and the school council puts forward the views of pupils on how the school can develop. Pupils enjoy their school and speak positively about their classmates and about the adults who work with them. As they say, 'Our teachers help us a lot!'

Achievement and progress for all groups across the school are satisfactory and pupils reach broadly average standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science by the time they leave for secondary education. Pupils' attainment in literacy, particularly in writing, is not as good as it should be and the school is developing a range of strategies to address the situation. It is too early to gauge the full impact of these strategies, but pupils' attainment in English is now beginning to rise.

Teaching is satisfactory overall and there are examples of good practice. Levels of challenge, however, are inconsistent and teachers sometimes direct learning too much and do not give pupils opportunities to take more responsibility for their own progress. Pupils are keen to learn but are sometimes rather passive when there is too much talk by the teacher in the classroom.

The curriculum is complemented by a wide range of sporting and extra-curricular activities, of which there is high take-up. Art and music are important elements of school life and both boys and girls sing with gusto during choir practice. Pastoral care is a strength of the school and pupils, parents and carers are grateful for the sterling work of teaching assistants. Indeed, care, guidance and support are good and pupils feel safe inside the school environs. Attendance, however, is below average and a minority of pupils do not come to school as regularly as they might.

The new headteacher and senior leadership team have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. Their detailed evaluation of the school's performance has highlighted, for example, deficiencies in the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly in relation to the learning environment and assessment. Nonetheless, there are good levels of teamwork among all staff; the school, therefore, demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement and it provides satisfactory value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Develop pupils' skills in literacy by:
 - - increasing small-group work on focused writing in order to develop their confidence in producing written assignments
 - - increasing the opportunities they have to connect their writing with real-life situations
 - - further developing guided reading.
- Ensure that the quality of pupils' learning is consistently good by:
 - - providing realistic challenge in all lessons so that pupils are encouraged to reach the standards of which they are capable
 - - giving pupils more opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning and progress.
- Improve pupils' attendance by:
 - - further developing communication with parents and carers to ensure that all families see the importance of regular attendance
 - - developing systems to provide pupils with positive feedback and rewards for good attendance.
- Improve provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - - developing the quality of the learning environment both indoors and outside
 - - providing more opportunities for child-initiated and independent learning
 - - ensuring consistency and accuracy in the assessment of children's learning across both Nursery and Reception.
- 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**

Pupils enjoy their lessons and they work hard in class. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve satisfactorily from their starting points and their attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. National test results in 2009, the first for the new school, showed that pupils' learning, progress and attainment in English were lagging behind those in mathematics and science. The school recognised that it needed to address the quality of pupils' writing and introduced small-group focused writing and also guided reading sessions. As a result, pupils are becoming more fluent in their reading and are therefore beginning to gain confidence in their writing. Inspection evidence, including lesson observations, demonstrates that attainment in English is now starting to rise. The school recognises, however, that there are not enough opportunities for pupils to link their writing assignments to real-life situations.

Pupils are proud of their school and speak highly of their teachers and teaching assistants. They enjoy the 'Morning Move It!' sessions at the start of the day and also 'Let's Get Cooking!' at the end. They behave well in lessons and around school and they thoroughly enjoyed dressing up as characters from literature on World Book Day. They welcome visitors warmly and are only too keen to show them around their school. The

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school council represents its constituents well but pupils throughout the school have insufficient opportunities to take responsibility. Pupils have a good awareness of what makes a balanced diet and give visitors detailed advice on how to eat healthily and on the importance of regular physical exercise. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory but music and art are strong elements; the Satellite Choir, for example, has a high reputation in school and pupils' singing during choir practice is a joy to hear. Attendance is low but is beginning to improve. There are insufficient rewards for pupils who attend well and the school is now looking to develop its communication with families to emphasise the importance of regular attendance.

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	3
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	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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Relationships between pupils and between pupils and the adults who work with them are a positive feature in all lessons. The quality of teaching is satisfactory but is inconsistent across the school. Where pupils are required to think for themselves they rise to the challenge and make good progress. For example, in an impressive history lesson on evacuation during the Second World War, pupils took responsibility to find

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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things out for themselves and questioned the historical sources with aplomb. They worked well in pairs to discuss what interested them about the experiences of young evacuees. Similarly, the impressive rap poems completed by pupils in Year 5 were the result of the teacher's high expectations of what they could do. In a significant number of lessons, however, teachers direct activities too much and pupils sometimes begin to lose interest because they are not encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and they are not challenged to think more deeply about the subject matter. Assessment is satisfactory overall but the quality of marking varies from exemplary practice comprising targets for improvement to little more than cursory comment. As a result, pupils are not always sure how they can improve their work.

Timetabled curriculum provision is adequately matched to pupils' needs, interests and aspirations with some specific strengths. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to see the links between subjects and to reinforce skills which are common to different areas of the curriculum. Pupils speak positively of the wide range of enrichment and sporting activities open to them, of which there is a high take up. Their parents and carers agree, adding, 'The variety of after-school sports clubs is second to none and really encourages our children to be active and healthy.' The planned programme of personal, social and health education incorporates the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) initiative and has a positive impact on raising pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

Pupils feel safe in school because, in their words, 'Our teachers and teaching assistants are always there for us if we have any problems.' Indeed, pastoral care is strong and adults do their utmost to foster the personal, social and emotional development of pupils. Teaching assistants provide those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities with good support during lessons and also individually and in small groups. Similarly, staff identify vulnerable pupils rapidly and accurately and do what they can to ensure that these pupils can take full advantage of all the school has to offer. Good induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly into the Nursery routines and there are effective links with the local high school to make sure that pupils in Year 6 are fully prepared to enter the next stage in their education.

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 effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving

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improvement is satisfactory. In a relatively short time leaders have ensured that the new school has become a cohesive unit and that teamwork at all levels is the order of the day. Teachers and teaching assistants are proud of what has already been achieved and comment, 'This is a hardworking staff which has done well during a difficult time of many changes.' The headteacher, well supported by her committed deputy headteacher and senior leadership team, has identified areas for improvement accurately and leaders recognise that more needs to be done to raise standards in literacy, to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to ensure that a significant number of pupils attend school more regularly. Governors are fully supportive of the school and are beginning to hold leaders to account with increasing rigour.

The school's promotion of equality of opportunity, including the tackling of discrimination, is satisfactory overall. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those considered vulnerable are well catered for by a talented team of teaching assistants.

Child protection and safeguarding procedures are good and fully meet national requirements. There are strong links with a variety of outside agencies for the benefit of the pupils. Office staff are meticulous in their record keeping.

The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory but underdeveloped. The school is a racially harmonious community and teachers are now looking to develop more partnerships with other schools, in order to enhance pupils' understanding of religions and cultures which are different from their own.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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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Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall but induction procedures are good and children settle down well in their new surroundings. The partnership with parents and carers is developing effectively and the recent workshop on phonics was well attended. Children enter the Nursery with skills which are below the levels expected for their age and they make satisfactory progress in both Nursery and Reception. The learning environment is underdeveloped: there are insufficient opportunities for children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor areas. Nonetheless, children are confident and keen to learn, enter the classrooms eagerly in the morning and behave well. They enjoy sharing with their classmates and have good relationships with the adults in the setting.

The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory but there are limited opportunities for children to develop independence and lead their own learning. On occasions, there is a lack of challenge in the activities and teachers sometimes miss the chance to capture children's interest and enthusiasm. Leadership and management are satisfactory and the coordinator has identified areas for development accurately and is working closely with the local authority to refine an action plan for improvement in the provision. There is a lack of consistency in recording and assessment across Nursery and Reception. The monitoring of children's progress is developing but is in its early stages and is not always as accurate as it could be. Children's welfare is promoted well and requirements regarding their health and safety are fully met.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers feel that their children enjoy school and that it keeps their sons and daughters safe. Similarly, most parents and carers are entirely satisfied with their children's experiences at St Edmunds. As parents and carers comment, 'This is a school with a very welcoming and friendly atmosphere and the staff are very approachable.' A very small minority of parents and carers are concerned about bullying and believe that the school does not always deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors accept that there is some bullying, but agree with the views of pupils who say that bullying is rare and that the school takes it seriously when it occurs. Inspectors also judge the school's strategies for managing behaviour to be effective and believe that pupils' behaviour is good as a result. Although most parents and carers are happy with the progress their children are making, some believe that pupils are not

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challenged enough during lessons. Inspectors accept that challenge is not always as high as it should be but that pupils are making satisfactory progress in their studies overall.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Edmunds RC 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 146 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 396 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	72	49	65	45	7	5	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	78	53	66	45	0	0	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	55	38	72	49	13	9	2	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	67	46	66	45	9	6	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	68	47	69	47	5	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	36	77	53	13	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	57	39	79	54	7	5	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)	42	29	85	58	8	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	36	80	55	10	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	32	73	50	16	11	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	29	74	51	19	13	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	52	36	79	54	8	5	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	42	69	47	7	5	2	1

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.



05 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Edmunds RC Primary School, Worsley, M38 0WH

Thank you so much for your warm welcome when the inspection team visited your school recently. You were very kind and friendly to us and we are particularly grateful to those of you who came to talk to us on Wednesday lunchtime. Your singing during the choir practice on Wednesday morning was marvellous and it got the inspection off to such an enjoyable start! I would now like to tell you what we found.

St Edmunds provides you with a satisfactory education and the school is improving all the time. Your standards in English could be higher but they are getting better and you are now beginning to write effectively for a range of audiences. You enjoy your learning and you are making satisfactory progress in your studies. You behave well, feel safe in school and are never afraid to give visitors advice on 'five a day' and why keeping fit is so important. You also take part in a wide range of sporting activities and we know the girls were very pleased when they won the netball match on Thursday afternoon! Your teachers and teaching assistants take good care of you and those of you who sometimes find the work difficult are supported well.

Your headteacher and all the other staff are always looking for ways to make things better. I have asked them to help you to improve your skills in literacy by encouraging you to have even more confidence in writing. I have also asked them to challenge you more in lessons and to give you more chances to learn for yourselves. I would also like your teachers to improve the indoor and outdoor areas in Nursery and Reception and encourage children to choose learning activities for themselves. Finally, we have asked your teachers to help you to see the importance of good attendance. Most of you know this already and are fully aware that you cannot do well if you do not attend!

Thanks again for your help with the inspection. Very best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Mr Jim Kidd

Lead Inspector

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