

St Edmund's Catholic Primary School

Radley Road, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 3PP

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| Inspection dates | 18–19 May 2016 |
| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Strong leadership from the headteacher has helped staff to work as a very effective team. They have greatly improved the quality of education in the school.
- The school is a thriving, multicultural community where boys and girls from different backgrounds get along together extremely well.
- The quality of teaching and pupils' attitudes to learning are much better than at the last inspection, leading to good achievement.
- The deputy headteacher, governing body and other leaders play a full part in driving improvements in the school.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour.
- Pupils are well behaved and eager to learn. They have a very good understanding of how they are doing, and so know how to improve. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They enjoy school and make good progress. The provision has been transformed since the last inspection.
- Accurate assessments of pupils' attainment help teachers to plan work that usually matches the needs of most pupils well. This helps all groups of pupils to achieve well over time.
- Teachers provide pupils with interesting tasks that pupils enjoy.
- Pupils have good relationships with staff. They rightly feel safe in the school because they know staff look after them well.
- The curriculum is wide-ranging, with a great variety of enrichment activities. This supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, as well as their academic progress.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some inconsistencies remain in teaching, for example in fully challenging the most able, checking how well all pupils get on and ensuring that they are fully focused and engaged throughout lessons.
- Adults in the early years do not consistently use day-to-day assessments to plan what children need to learn next. This reduces their ability to build on children's existing understanding, and so accelerate their progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, and so ensure that pupils' progress is even more rapid, by:
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are more consistently challenged
 - more systematically checking on the ongoing progress of pupils during lessons, so that any misconceptions can be quickly identified and addressed
 - using strategies more consistently to engage pupils and maintain their concentration throughout lessons.
- In the early years, build more effectively on children's existing understanding by making better use of the day-to-day assessments to plan activities that are challenging and interesting.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Since the last inspection, the new headteacher has worked very effectively with her staff to establish more consistency in practice. With great support from her deputy, and increasingly strong support from other leaders and the governing body, she has ensured that teaching, achievement and behaviour are all good throughout the school.
- The ambitious culture that has been established for pupils to do well academically and personally is shared by all staff, governors and by the pupils themselves.
- The quality of teaching is managed well. Leaders monitor teachers' practice closely through observations in lessons, checking pupils' work in books and carefully analysing pupils' progress. Leaders provide clear advice and the school provides extra training to help staff address any issues. Clear targets are set for improvement through the school's appraisal system. Progress through the pay scales is dependent on staff meeting their targets.
- The school has established an effective and efficient system for recording pupils' attainment and progress. Staff have worked closely with colleagues, in this school and in other local schools, to ensure that their judgements are accurate and consistent. Teachers use these results well to plan work that is suitably challenging for different groups of pupils.
- Leaders analyse assessment results regularly to check that all groups and individuals are making the progress they should, and discuss any issues in detail with class teachers. Staff then plan, and put into practice, actions to help any pupils or groups in danger of falling behind. Teachers are held to account for their pupils' achievement and work hard to help them succeed.
- A key element in the school's approach to monitoring pupils' progress is the use of individual 'tracking sheets' by pupils for reading, writing and mathematics. These show how well pupils are doing in relation to the detailed expectations of the national curriculum, and are filled in by staff and pupils together. The sheets are shared with parents on a weekly basis. Pupils know just what they need to do next to progress, and are keen to succeed. This is extremely motivating for them, and strongly supports their overall good achievement.
- The school has introduced the new national curriculum effectively, with a good emphasis on reading, writing and mathematics. The school balances this with a range of interesting work in other subjects including science, which has a high profile. Pupils have good opportunities to tackle experiments. French is taught on a weekly basis, and pupils enjoy this, although they have only limited opportunities to practise between their weekly lessons. Pupils' learning and enthusiasm are also enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, visits and visitors. Special events, such as science days or book days, add to pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils were greatly looking forward to the 'mother tongue day' due the day after the inspection, to celebrate the many different languages spoken by pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through many aspects of the curriculum and in assemblies. Pupils have a secure grasp of British values, and show this in their respect for each other's views and cultures. They participate in democratic processes, for example in the elections for the school council. Pupils are very conscious that school councillors have a responsibility to consult all their classmates about their views.
- The school makes good use of pupil premium funding. Most of the money is spent on academic support for individual pupils. This carefully tailored support helps contribute to the good progress these pupils make across the school. Other money has been spent on ensuring that all disadvantaged pupils are able to take a full part in the life of the school: for example, going on visits, receiving instrumental music tuition or joining in extra-curricular clubs. A small sum has been spent on transport, which has boosted the overall attendance of disadvantaged pupils.
- Sports premium funding has been spent effectively. Specialist expertise has been bought in and this has helped to increase the range of activities available for pupils, both in lessons and in clubs. Extra training and the opportunity to observe specialists have also extended the confidence and skills of staff in teaching physical education. The school has also bought extra equipment, such as table-tennis tables, to extend the range of activities. The involvement of pupils in after-school clubs has greatly increased. Pupils are proud of their recent good levels of success in inter-school competitions.

- The local authority has given good support to the school, particularly in helping the school to improve provision in mathematics, writing and early years. Expertise from another experienced headteacher has been arranged and has contributed well to developments. Ongoing support as the school has improved has helped managers to validate their judgements and to refine their practice.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors have greatly improved their effectiveness since the last inspection. They now have good systems to check how the school is doing, and they share leaders' ambitions to get even better. A strong emphasis on improving pupils' achievement is enhanced by governors' very good grasp of the school's assessment information. They use their analysis of this to challenge the school and ask for more information. The school has responded positively so that systems are of more use to all leaders. The governing body keeps a track of the quality of teaching and ensures that any issues are addressed. Governors give a strong emphasis to keeping pupils safe, and have worked with staff to make sure that procedures are appropriate.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff and governors are well trained and keep up to date with recent developments. For example, they have undertaken the 'Prevent' training about combating extremism. Staff are extremely vigilant in monitoring the well-being of pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable. Good links with outside agencies and parents support this work. There are good examples of the school taking swift and appropriate action when concerns were raised.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils respond well to these expectations. Teachers establish clear routines and insist that pupils follow them. This ensures that pupils behave well and work hard. Classrooms are orderly and there is a positive ethos that supports learning.
- Teachers give pupils clear explanations and often use interactive whiteboards effectively to illustrate what they are saying. They ask searching questions to make sure that pupils have understood key points.
- Teachers generally make good use of the information about pupils' attainment to prepare tasks that are suitably challenging and interesting. Pupils who struggle with academic work are given easier, but still challenging, tasks and often receive both help and challenge from skilled extra adults. Teachers prepare more difficult work for the most able, who respond well and work hard. At times, chances are missed to challenge these pupils further, or sometimes they do the same work as everyone else before moving on to more appropriately difficult tasks.
- Teachers motivate pupils greatly through encouraging and challenging feedback. This is very effective in helping pupils to improve, which can be seen clearly when pupils refine and improve their work in class.
- Adults generally keep a careful eye on how pupils are getting on in lessons, quickly intervening to address misconceptions and challenging them to do even better. Occasionally, this is not done in a sufficiently systematic and timely fashion. This can mean that progress slows for some pupils when their misconceptions are not addressed until later in the lesson.
- Pupils discuss their ideas together productively in lessons. This builds on the good relationships pupils have. It develops their speaking, listening and social skills and supports their learning across the curriculum, particularly in writing.
- Teachers have good strategies that successfully engage pupils' interest and maintain their concentration. As well as the opportunities to discuss their work, they also give pupils small written tasks to undertake that keep them involved and enthusiastic. However, when teachers do not consistently use such strategies, pupils' attention wanders and their progress slows.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Adults take great care to make sure pupils are safe and happy in school. Pupils are very aware of this and are confident that the adults will help them if there is a problem.

- There is a strong emphasis on social and moral development that pupils respond to well. They have good relationships with each other, and value their friends and their accomplishments. For example, they are proud of the diverse nature of the school's intake and the different languages that their classmates can speak.
- Pupils are keen to help others who are less fortunate than themselves, exemplified by their contributions to charities through the work of the 'Mini Vinnies'.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe, and know about keeping safe on the internet, for example, and on the roads.
- Pupils understand the different kinds of bullying. They say that this does happen sometimes, but incidents are few and far between. They are confident that staff will deal quickly with any incidents that arise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils themselves say that behaviour has improved since the last inspection, and they respect the sanctions that are in place for misbehaviour and the rewards for doing well. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their above-average attendance.
- Pupils work hard in class and are keen to learn. They show high levels of resilience when things go wrong, and have come to realise that their mistakes are opportunities for them to learn more.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and cheerful. They value many things about the school, particularly the teachers, their friends and the varied activities they can join in with. A group of pupils in Year 6 agreed with a classmate who said that, although this is a Catholic school, everyone is valued whatever their religion or wherever they come from.
- Occasionally, minor misbehaviours can disrupt learning, but this is always extremely short-lived because such incidents are dealt with well by staff. The vast majority of pupils have learned to carry on with their work if a classmate who struggles to conform is occasionally silly. The school's records show that the behaviour of pupils who have been troublesome in the past gets much better over time.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils' progress has improved steadily since the last inspection. Improvements to assessment have given the school reliable information about how well different groups are doing. Pupils at the end of Year 6 last year, for example, did not do as well in mathematics as in reading and writing across key stage 2. However, the school's information shows clearly that they made accelerated progress in mathematics during Year 6 to overcome much, but not all, of the shortfalls from previous years. Their progress in writing was particularly good during their last year in school, and this was mirrored across the other year groups as the school focused on developing this subject.
- Progress this year has been good in reading, writing and mathematics across all year groups. Weaker progress in mathematics in the past is being rapidly overturned as the school has focused on this subject since September. Previous differences in the progress of boys and girls, with boys lagging behind in writing, and girls not doing so well in mathematics, have been largely eliminated.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and are fluent, confident and enthusiastic readers by the end of Year 6. They get off to an increasingly good start in the younger classes, and the improved teaching of phonics has resulted in above-average outcomes in the phonics progress checks in Year 1.
- Children start in the early years with accomplishments that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress and standards are improving. Last year, pupils' attainment was broadly in line with the national average by the end of the Reception Year.
- Disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress overall as other pupils, and reach similar standards. Published results can be misleading, because of the small numbers in each cohort. This means that just one or two disadvantaged pupils who have special educational needs or disability in a year group can distort the figures. However, the school tracks each individual's progress carefully, and spends pupil premium funding to provide bespoke support where it is needed. Individual records show that all are making good progress from their starting points.
- The most able pupils do well. They reach high standards and enjoy tackling difficult work. One boy pointed out that, although work was sometimes easy, the teachers would then give them something more difficult. Overall, these pupils make good progress over the course of a year from their starting points, despite the fact that sometimes their progress slows when work is not challenging enough.

- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress from their starting points in the light of their needs. The school provides extra help, both in class and in withdrawal groups outside the classroom, tailoring the help to pupils' particular needs. Good support is often given by skilled teaching assistants.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress. They quickly learn to speak, write and read in English, and then apply these skills to learning in other subjects. These pupils quickly catch up with their classmates, once they have mastered the basics of English.
- A strength of pupils' work is the high quality of presentation and handwriting across the school. Teachers successfully insist that pupils write consistently in a fluent, joined hand from an early age. The quality of handwriting in the current Year 2 is particularly high. However, pupils' spelling across the school is not always of the same high quality, with careless mistakes apparent in some books.

Early years provision

is good

- The setting is much better than at the last inspection. The facilities, both indoors and outdoors, are of high quality and much better organised than in the past. The leader has supported colleagues well to form an effective team of adults who all work purposefully to develop children's achievement and to foster their personal development.
- Children start in Nursery or Reception with skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age, although many lack self-confidence. They make good progress, particularly in their personal and social skills, and quickly gain the confidence to join in all aspects of the setting. About three quarters of the children in Reception are on track to reach a good level of development by the end of the year, which is better than last year and is above average. A good start is made on phonics, with some Nursery children already able to blend simple words with confidence.
- Children are happy and settled in the setting and behave well. They develop good levels of independence when required, choosing activities enthusiastically and showing good levels of concentration and perseverance. They listen attentively when working on activities directed by an adult and follow instructions well.
- Teaching is good. There is a good balance in the setting between adult-directed activities and those chosen by the children themselves. A key strength that supports children's progress is the skilled way in which adults intervene in children's play, or even join in. Through questioning, for example, they develop children's understanding, extend their vocabulary and challenge them to attempt new things.
- Adults make regular and accurate assessments of children's attainment and interests as they play. These assessments are brought together well to inform planning in the longer term, working out what children need to learn next. However, adults miss opportunities to identify 'next steps' which build quickly on children's existing understanding in the shorter term. However, the opportunity is missed to build on the day-to-day assessments that adults make to identify 'next steps' in the shorter term and build quickly on children's existing understanding. The planning of activities for children who have special educational needs or disability is strong, and carefully matched to individual needs.
- Staff ensure that pupils' welfare needs are met well, and they make sure that they are safe in school and learn how to contribute to their own safety and that of their friends.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 123225 |
| Local authority | Oxfordshire |
| Inspection number | 10012247 |

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

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| 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 | 223 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | John Matthews |
| Headteacher | Maria Delany-White |
| Telephone number | 01235 521 558 |
| Website | www.st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk |
| Email address | Office.3856@st-edmunds-rc.oxon.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 26–27 February 2014 |

Information about this school

- The school is average in size for a primary school. It has one class in each age group in key stages 1 and 2. There are two classes in Year 3. There is a full-time Reception class, and a part-time Nursery class that operates in the morning.
- The majority of pupils are White British. Two in every five pupils come from a wide range of other ethnic heritages. This is an above-average proportion. About a quarter of the pupils speak English as an additional language, which is more than in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is about average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is well below average, at around a third of the national figure. The pupil premium is extra government funding provided to support the education of pupils who are known to be entitled to free school meals, or children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- There have been significant changes in staffing since the last inspection. A new headteacher started after Easter 2014, and several other members of the senior leadership team have taken up post since then.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in each class. Several of these observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher or her deputy. The inspectors also observed pupils in assembly, at break times and around the school.
- Inspectors met formally with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. They also spoke informally to parents, pupils and staff.
- Examples of pupils' work in their books were analysed. Several pupils were heard reading.
- The team examined a range of documentation, particularly that relating to keeping pupils safe, and information about their attainment and progress. Inspectors also examined the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness.
- The team took account of 68 replies to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the school's own information about parental views. The inspectors also checked 29 replies to a survey of staff views.

Inspection team

Steven Hill, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kusum Trikha

Ofsted Inspector

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