

St Edward's Roman Catholic/Church of England School, Poole

Inspection report - amended

Unique Reference Number	113893
Local Authority	Poole
Inspection number	289759
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Bradley Simmons HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	12–18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	700
6th form	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Morris
Headteacher	Pola Bevan
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2003
School address	Dale Valley Road Oakdale Poole BH15 3HY
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Age group	12–18
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to Ofsted notification

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Edward's Roman Catholic / Church of England School is one of nine such joint denominational Christian schools nationwide. Around 55% of its students are Roman Catholic. The great majority of the remainder have a Church of England background. In addition there are a few students from other denominations and faiths. Students come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds, but overall the context in which the school operates is favourable. Around 5% of those on the school roll are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. Around 80% of the students are White British. Students' attainment on entry to the school is slightly above the national average. Just under 15% of students have learning difficulties. The school is popular and oversubscribed.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

A parent wrote to inspectors: 'I feel that the St Edward's staff team work together to promote the development of the whole personality and intellect of each student.' In a nutshell, this is the reason why St Edward's is a good and improving school. It is led with quiet determination by the headteacher, together with a senior leadership team which shares her vision.

The vast majority of parents express similar positive views because they believe, correctly, that their children make good progress overall at the school, and attain high standards by the end of Year 11. Students enjoy their education and talk with great enthusiasm about it. After a very strong French lesson, one Year 8 student said to an inspector, 'You were in that French lesson, weren't you? It was fab!'

Good teaching is the prime reason that students achieve academic success. In an outstanding Year 9 English lesson, for example, the teacher held the class entranced as he related an episode from his childhood. He told of his fear during a visit to a pig farm, and used this to create for the class an understanding of the physical presence of 'Major', the boar in George Orwell's *Animal Farm*. The lesson included excellent opportunities for students to assess critically each other's work. Teaching is not consistently this strong. In a small minority of lessons, planning is weak, teaching does not sufficiently interest students and so low level disruption results. In a recent survey, over a quarter of students agreed with inspectors that such behaviour should be checked more rigorously. In some subjects, for example, mathematics and French, students are set clear targets. They know not only what levels or grades they should achieve, but also have a clear understanding of what they have to learn or improve to get there. This good practice is not yet fully embedded across all subjects.

The Christian foundation of this school strongly underpins its work. It is seen particularly in the outstanding contribution students make in acting as mentors to their peers, and in the large amounts of money they raise for local, national and international charities. Assemblies and tutor sessions provide opportunities for reflection and prayer. Students feel safe at the school; bullying is rare. The vast majority of students say that they are strongly discouraged from smoking or misusing drugs or alcohol. They know the dangers, and parents may be assured that the school deals with serious transgressions in a measured yet rigorous manner.

The school's curriculum is satisfactory with some strengths. Working with external partners, the school has developed a good range of vocational courses for students in Years 10 and 11. However, there are some gaps in provision for citizenship and information and communication technology (ICT) for these year groups. Provision for students with learning difficulties and for those who have difficulty managing their behaviour is good. The Learning Centre provides a supportive and much appreciated environment which builds the confidence of vulnerable students so they are enabled to succeed.

The senior leadership team have set a clear direction for improvement, prioritising the development of the capacity of subject leaders to evaluate and improve the work of their departments. This work is ongoing and has yet to fulfil its aim of reducing inconsistencies across and within all subjects. The recently reconstituted governing body is relatively inexperienced but has made a good start in setting up and implementing systems that are giving governors clear insights into the work of the school.

Clear improvement has been effected by this senior leadership team, demonstrating the school's strong capacity to become outstanding.

Effectiveness and efficiency of the sixth form

Grade: 3

The sixth form is satisfactory overall. The range of students' attainment on entry to the sixth form is wide, reflecting the school's open access policy. Overall, students make satisfactory progress, and attain in line with national averages. At A level, the number of students achieving A and B grades was above the national average in 2006. Sixth formers are enthusiastic and have high aspirations. They are confident that they are developing the qualities to enable them to succeed at university and in their lives beyond.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Many lessons are challenging and interesting, but in a few lessons, little attempt is made to address the issue of the range of potential attainment in the teaching group. Curricular provision is satisfactory. A good range of academic and some vocational courses are available and students can also take qualifications at other centres. However, some teaching groups are very small; this has an impact on the quality of learning in that it limits discussion and the sharing of ideas.

Some elements of care and guidance are good and students value the opportunity for one-to-one tuition through the academic tutoring programme. Monitoring ensures that students who are not progressing well enough are identified and appropriate steps taken. However, students express concern that not all the teachers of one newly introduced course are fully confident in supporting them to meet the course requirements.

The head of sixth form has overseen a considerable expansion of the sixth form in the last four years and accommodation and resources are now good. She has successfully established an inclusive sixth form where students can succeed. However, overall leadership and management are satisfactory rather than good because new initiatives are not fully in place and teaching and learning are not being rigorously monitored.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build the capacity of subject leaders to monitor and improve the consistency of teaching and assessment.
- Eliminate low level disruptive behaviour.
- Strengthen provision in ICT and citizenship at Key Stage 4.
- Improve provision in the sixth form so that students' rate of progress increases.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

Overall, this school does well by its students. They achieve well and attain high standards. When they join the school at the beginning of Year 8, students' attainment is slightly above that normally expected. From this point, students have over the last few years consistently made outstanding progress in Years 8 and 9. In English, mathematics and science, they have met consistently challenging targets to attain standards in their Year 9 tests that are significantly higher than national averages.

Students make slightly less progress in Key Stage 4, although overall it is still good and it remains outstanding in mathematics. They attain highly by the end of Year 11, with the percentage of students attaining five GCSEs at grades A* to C, including English and mathematics, well in excess of the national average. School data for 2006 demonstrate that

minority ethnic students achieve at least as well as their peers. Students with learning difficulties achieve well taking into account their lower starting points.

In the sixth form, standards and progress are average, although students achieved good results in 2006 in individual subject and vocational areas. Many students improved on their target grades.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Most students enjoy school, attend well and are keen to learn. Students say that the school is a safe environment and that incidents of bullying are rare. The contribution made to the school community by students involved in peer support is outstanding. They act as learning mentors or offer support to more vulnerable students. Students value the time given freely by many staff to support them. They were particularly appreciative of both the music and physical education (PE) departments for the range of after-school activities they provide. The chaplaincy worker is valued by students and plays an integral role in the life of the school.

Behaviour is satisfactory overall, but when lessons fail to engage the interest of students, and the behaviour management skills of teachers are less effective, behaviour in lessons deteriorates.

Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong, although more could be done to prepare them better for life in a culturally diverse society. Students are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and appreciate the commitment of the school to offering healthy food choices. However, the PE time available for those students who have not opted to undertake PE studies in Years 10 and 11 is too short. This limits opportunities for all students to undertake regular, strenuous physical activity. The school forum has been reintroduced this year but has yet to make enough impact for students to feel that their views are consistently heard. Students make an extremely worthwhile contribution to communities beyond school by raising large sums of money for various charities. The development of workplace skills is good and students are well prepared for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is good and as a result students make good progress in most lessons. In the stronger lessons all students are challenged by well planned, interesting and varied activities. Students work with considerable enthusiasm, the pace of learning is fast, challenging, and teachers' expectations are high. In an outstanding Year 12 business studies lesson, for example, the students were totally involved in their own learning and their independent study skills were highly developed.

In a few lessons teaching is dull and there is an over-reliance on a narrow range of tasks which do not interest students or match their abilities. As a result students become bored and low level disruption begins to interfere with the learning of the majority.

There are good examples of comprehensive assessment strategies, including marking and target setting, that enable the students to gain a good understanding of what they need to do to make further improvements in their learning. This good practice is not found consistently across, or within, all subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

Overall the school has a satisfactory range of appropriate courses and activities to enrich the lives of learners. All areas of the curriculum are reviewed regularly to best match the individual needs of its students. Although drama has been added to Years 8 and 9, there are still weaknesses in the delivery, assessment and reporting of citizenship and ICT in Years 10 and 11. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is broad and balanced and the school uses both setting by ability and mixed ability teaching effectively, and as a result students make outstanding progress. The range of courses is extended in Key Stage 4 by a wide range of vocational courses. Although many students opt for PE studies in Year 10, the taught time for those students who do not is below the recommended two hours a week.

Students appreciate and participate in high numbers in a good range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sports, music and performing arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 3

The level of care, guidance and support students receive is satisfactory. Safeguarding arrangements are effective and up to date. Parents feel their children are well cared for and make good academic progress. The provision to meet the needs of students with specific learning difficulties is good. Links with external agencies are strong and support those who are vulnerable or at risk. Provision for disaffected students is good and ensures that they stay in mainstream education and gain qualifications.

Subject staff identify underachieving students, and some intervention strategies, such as allocating a student mentor, are successful in helping students make progress. The school's procedures for health and safety are satisfactory. The lack of a centralised system impedes management's ability to ensure that procedures are fully implemented by all staff.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Grade for sixth form: 3

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher is a determined presence, and demonstrates a powerful and convincing vision for continued improvement. She and her deputy have, in the short period since their appointment, worked to excellent effect to create a cohesive and influential senior leadership team. Senior leaders have rightly prioritised the development of the role of the subject leader, encouraging individuals to undertake nationally recognised training to help them in their work. Increasingly, subject leaders are accountable for the work

of their departments. In some cases, however, they do not yet have the skills to ensure that their department offers consistently good teaching and assessment.

The governing body has recently been reconstituted and has already undertaken training to develop its role. The chair of governors provides good leadership, and is committed to challenging and supporting the school so that it continues on its improvement path. Governors support the school well, for example by meeting with parents whose children need a comprehensive support package to stress the importance of parental support.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	
The behaviour of learners	3	
The attendance of learners	2	
How well learners enjoy their education	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No	
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No	

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Dear Students We very much enjoyed being at St Edward's when we inspected the school recently. Thank you to those of you who helped us reach our judgements by answering our questions during lessons. Thank you also to those of you who spared time in your busy schedules to meet with members of the inspection team. Your school is doing a good job. In reaching this judgement, we took into account your views during the inspection, your recent school survey, and your parents' views from questionnaires. We thought that the following aspects of the school were strengths:

- Your headteacher and the senior leadership team provide strong and determined leadership which is focused on your academic and social needs.
- Teaching is good overall and you make good progress and attain high standards as a result.
- The contribution made by many of you in your capacity as peer mentors is outstanding.
- You enjoy your education and your attendance levels are above average. Well done!
- You feel safe at school and told us that bullying is rare.

Some aspects of the school's work should be improved. We want the school to ensure that teaching is consistently good. You need to know not only which level or grade you are aiming for, but also exactly what you have to learn or improve to get there. We want all teachers to deal properly with behaviour issues (and so do you). We want the school to ensure that you are getting your full entitlement to ICT and citizenship courses. Finally, we want sixth form provision to be improved so that you make as much progress in Years 12 and 13 as you do in the rest of the school. Please do take the time to read the full report. Good luck in the future.

With best wishes

Bradley Simmons Her Majesty's Inspector