

# St Edward's Catholic Primary School

Eastleigh Road, Kettering, Northamptonshire NN15 6PT

## Inspection dates

21–22 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' analysis of the school's current performance lacks accuracy. Their evaluations of the quality of teaching and of the provision in early years are too optimistic.
- The quality of teaching is not consistently good throughout the school. Teachers do not match the work consistently well to pupils' abilities.
- Teachers do not give the most able pupils enough guidance to improve their writing. Too few of the most able pupils develop the higher level skills of which they are capable.
- The school's current assessments show that boys achieve less well than girls in mathematics, in almost all year groups.
- Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 has been below the national average since 2016.
- From their starting points, children in early years, including those in the early stages of learning to speak English, do not make consistently good progress over time.
- In early years, teachers are not using their assessments of what children can do effectively. Tasks are not consistently well matched to pupils' abilities, particularly in writing.

### The school has the following strengths

- The teaching of phonics is strong. As a result, the majority of pupils typically reach the required standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that the school's arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Parents and carers, staff and pupils say that the school is safe.
- Pupils cooperate well with each other. They behave well in lessons and at breaktimes.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.
- As a result of the school's effective work with pupils and families, attendance is improving.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management in order to bring about sustained improvement by making sure that:
  - leaders and those responsible for governance evaluate the school's performance accurately and prioritise appropriate areas for improvement
  - leaders and governors and trust officers carry out rigorous checks to monitor and improve the quality of teaching, particularly in early years, so that it is at least good throughout the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that pupils, especially in key stage 2, attain higher and make faster progress by ensuring that teachers:
  - consistently set work that is well matched to pupils' abilities, particularly for the most able pupils in writing
  - place greater emphasis on asking effective questions and setting clear expectations for what they wish pupils to achieve in lessons
  - share effective practice with colleagues so that the quality of teaching is consistently good, teachers' subject knowledge is secure and standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics rise rapidly in all year groups and especially for boys in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching in early years by making sure that:
  - teachers accurately assess children's abilities and use these to inform the next steps in children's learning, particularly in writing
  - children, particularly those who are in the early stages of learning to speak English, make more rapid progress from their starting points in listening, understanding, speaking, reading and writing.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders' evaluations of the school's performance are too generous in some aspects. In particular, they currently overestimate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders are also too optimistic in their view of teaching and leadership in early years. Consequently, leaders are not prioritising actions for improvement as well as they might.
- Leaders and trust officers do not have a clear view of the quality of provision in early years. This is because those responsible have not carried out thorough checks in that part of the school.
- The headteacher and her newly appointed deputy are ambitious for the school. They have made sure that inadequate teaching has been eliminated. Following a period of staff turnover, there is now greater stability. A full complement of permanent teachers, some of whom are relatively new to the profession, is now in place.
- Leaders and staff have an increasingly precise overview of pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is a result of the newly established system for assessing pupils' performance.
- The headteacher works closely with the effective special educational needs coordinator to assess and track the progress of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This analysis enables staff to deploy effective support where it is most needed. As a result, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.
- Teachers and support staff say that they value the opportunities provided for professional development. They speak warmly of the support and training they receive from leaders and from the trust. They value opportunities to work with other colleagues across the trust to moderate and improve the quality of their work. The positive impact of this can be seen in current pupils' improved progress in mathematics.
- Leaders have made sure that a broad and balanced curriculum is in place. Pupils speak enthusiastically about their learning, saying they enjoy topics such as the Second World War, local history and 'working scientifically'. A wide range of activities is available to supplement and enrich the curriculum. For example, pupils enjoy sports, film, art and drama clubs. Every pupil has the opportunity to learn a musical instrument and Year 4 pupils receive swimming lessons. As a result, pupils have opportunities to develop a broad range of skills and are becoming well-rounded individuals.
- Leaders' work to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is strong and the related themes run as a thread throughout the life of the school. The school's ethos is strongly inclusive and this effectively supports pupils' understanding of British values such as democracy and tolerance.

- Leaders use the additional funding provided through the primary physical education and sport premium effectively. The funding is used to train school staff and to run before- and after-school sports clubs for pupils as well as playtime activities. As a result, pupils have increased access to a wide range of physical activities that improve their fitness and well-being.

## **Governance of the school**

- Since it took on the governance of the school, the trust has acknowledged that standards have declined. The trust has put in place an enhanced degree of support for the school, in order to secure improvement. The outcomes of this, so far, have been mixed.
- For example, the trust has not identified the weaknesses in early years teaching and has therefore had no impact on improving this area of the school.
- However, the trust is providing effective support for new and newly qualified teachers; it is also providing effective opportunities for staff to meet in their year groups, across the trust, to check the accuracy of their pupil assessments. This has led to improving standards in mathematics.
- The local governing body is very clear about its roles and responsibilities in relation to the school and is becoming increasingly effective. For example, governors have made sure that a thorough check of the school's safeguarding procedures has been carried out. In their meetings, governors increasingly ask challenging questions of leaders about the school's performance.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders have made sure that all the necessary checks are in place, in line with statutory requirements.
- Pupils, parents and staff say that the school is safe. Pupils confirm that they receive teaching about staying safe in assemblies and in lessons; they speak knowledgeably about staying safe online.
- The staff work effectively as a team to ensure pupils' safety. The headteacher's scrupulous records show that a wide range of training has been provided for staff and governors. New staff receive safeguarding training as soon as they are appointed, as part of their induction procedure.
- There is a rigorous process in place to make sure that any child protection concerns are dealt with quickly and decisively. The school's work to support its most vulnerable pupils and families is a particular strength.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- The inconsistent quality of teaching across the school means that pupils do not learn as well and progress as quickly as they should.
- Observations of learning during the inspection showed that pupils' progress in lessons typically slows when the work is not well matched to their abilities. On other occasions,

pupils' attention wanders when the teachers' instructions are not clear and precise. Occasionally, in mathematics, pupils were seen to complete inaccurate work as a result of the teacher's weak subject knowledge.

- In English, the most able pupils do not consistently produce written work to the high standard of which they are capable. This is because teachers do not consistently follow the school's policy for allowing pupils time to edit their work. Teachers do not give the most able pupils precise guidance to help them develop higher level writing skills once they have mastered technical competence in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- On occasion, teachers' ineffective questioning leads to slow learning for pupils. This is because pupils struggle to give the desired responses and, therefore, time in lessons is not consistently used to best effect.
- When teachers use effective questioning, pupils work confidently and give articulate responses to questions which move their learning on quickly. For example, in a Year 6 'book talk' session, pupils worked successfully in small groups to practise their reading skills. They used examples from a range of texts to give thoughtful responses to the teacher's carefully worded questions.
- Across the school, teaching assistants provide sensitive and effective support for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. As a result, these pupils make positive contributions in lessons and make good progress from their starting points.
- Where teaching is most effective, it enables pupils to make good progress in both key stages 1 and 2. Systems are in place to enable the good practice to be shared; it is too soon for the impact of this to be evident across the staff team.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school, saying that they enjoy their lessons and get plenty of help if they need it. They describe the school as being 'like a family' where everyone is 'there for each other'.
- It is clear to see that staff and pupils have positive relationships. Staff and governors are keen to stress the inclusive nature of the school and inspectors found plenty of evidence to confirm this, for example by noting how well pupils cooperate with each other and show respect for all.
- In the school hall, and in central areas, displays and posters encourage pupils to be reflective about their attitudes to learning and to others. When they gather for collective worship, or in the dining hall at the start of lunchtime, pupils conduct themselves in a quietly reflective manner.
- Pupils state clearly that they feel safe at the school. They can give examples of lessons and assemblies relating to themes such as online safety, 'stranger danger' and water safety.

- The school's records show that instances of discriminatory behaviour, including bullying, are rare. Pupils and parents who spoke with inspectors expressed confidence in the school's ability to tackle any such incidents if they arose.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are friendly and courteous to each other, staff and visitors. Their conduct around school, during lunchtimes and playtimes, is good. Playtimes flow smoothly because pupils follow familiar routines that promote cooperative play. The dining hall has a happy and sociable atmosphere.
- In lessons, pupils' attention occasionally wanders and they lose focus when the work is not closely matched to their needs or abilities. In all other instances, pupils' behaviour in lessons is good.
- Pupils say that behaviour around school is typically good. This is confirmed by the evidence recorded in leaders' well-organised incident logs, which show few occasions of unwanted behaviour.
- The school's processes for recording, and following up, daily absences are timely and robust. In 2016/17, the number of persistent absences increased to be above the national figure. The headteacher has close knowledge of the circumstances surrounding each case of persistent absence. As a result of her tenacity in tackling issues, current figures show that persistent absence has reduced from the equivalent period in 2016/17.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Currently, pupils in key stages 1 and 2 do not make consistently strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Evidence from the work in their books and from observing learning in lessons confirms this inconsistency. In particular, there is little evidence of the most able pupils deepening their understanding and reaching the high standards of which they are capable in writing.
- Over time, standards in mathematics across the school have been consistently below the national average. As a result of the school's work to tackle this issue, current assessments show that pupils are making stronger progress in mathematics. However, in all year groups except Year 2, girls are currently making much stronger progress than boys. Evidence to confirm this can also be seen in current pupils' books. Leaders confirm that boys' progress in mathematics, although improving, is an area for continued focus.
- At the end of key stage 2, pupils' attainment and progress in reading and mathematics have been well below the national averages for at least two years. In 2017, standards in writing also dropped to below national figures. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils made less progress than other pupils nationally, in reading, writing and mathematics.
- At the end of key stage 1, pupils' attainment has been typically above the national average, until 2017. This is a result of previously over-generous teacher assessments; leaders acknowledge that previous figures do not reflect pupils' actual attainment over

time. Leaders are confident that current assessments are accurate. The inspection findings agree with this evaluation.

- As a result of consistently effective teaching, the majority of pupils typically achieve the required standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- The new early years leader does not yet have a secure picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Her evaluation, and that of senior leaders and the trust, are too generous.
- Since her appointment in September 2017, the early years leader has introduced a new approach to teaching and learning in early years. Inspectors' observations showed that this approach is not being consistently applied. Staff are not consistently using their assessments to check what children can do and to determine what needs to be done to move their learning forward. Consequently, children are not making consistently good progress from their starting points.
- In particular, the school's current assessment information shows that children are making less progress in the area of learning related to writing than in other areas. Many are still in the early stages of mark-making; there is a lack of clear guidance for children in how to form letters accurately and they are not regularly encouraged to practise their writing skills. Although there are informal opportunities for children to write, inspectors found little evidence that children choose to take up these opportunities.
- Children enter early years at a level of development which is in line with, or below, that typical for their age. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development by the end of the year has remained static and below national figures for three years.
- In addition, a growing number of children join early years in the early stages of learning to speak English. Currently, just over one third of the cohort do not speak English as their first language. During the inspection, little evidence was seen of these children receiving additional support in order to make the accelerated progress required. The school's latest assessment information shows that, in early years, these children are currently below age-related expectations in a number of areas of learning, especially those relating to language and literacy.
- Safeguarding in early years is effective. Policies and procedures are in place and staff have received all of the required training. Children are very well cared for; staff are aware of the needs of individuals and promote a happy and caring atmosphere in the Reception class.
- The early years staff have built positive relationships with parents through the initial information evening and home visits. Staff have been successful in encouraging parents to support their children's education through the widely used home learning booklets.

- Children move around the four learning areas with confidence. Staff report that children are able to dress themselves in outerwear, prior to using the outdoor area, with greater independence than at the start of the school year.
- Current assessments show that children are making good progress in the areas of learning relating to number and shape as a result of the school's focus on mathematics during the autumn term. They also show good progress in personal, social and emotional development.

## School details

Unique reference number	141634
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10041577

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Rob Hill
Headteacher	Pauline Cuddihy
Telephone number	01536 481430
Website	<a href="http://www.st-edwards.northants.sch.uk">www.st-edwards.northants.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:pauline.cuddihy@st-luke-at.co.uk">pauline.cuddihy@st-luke-at.co.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school converted to academy status on 1 March 2015. It is a member of the St Luke Academies Trust.
- St Edward's Catholic Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and of pupils who speak English as an additional language, are above those seen nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014 to 2016.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 32 lessons, some jointly with senior leaders, across all classes.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and considered the school's assessment information on the progress and standards achieved by pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about their enjoyment of reading.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the senior leadership team, and leaders with responsibilities for early years, and for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They also met with other teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body. The lead inspector also met with the school improvement director from the St Luke Academies Trust.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils and also spoke informally with pupils during lessons, lunchtimes and breaktimes.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. The lead inspector also considered the 33 responses from Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, minutes of meetings of the local governing body, the school's current information on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance records, behaviour logs, external reports on the work of the school, monitoring and evaluation records, and a range of documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jane Moore

Ofsted Inspector

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