Inspection of St Edward's Catholic Primary School

New Road, Sheerness, Kent ME12 1BW

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	**Requires improvement**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Good**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Outstanding**
Previous inspection grade	Good

The headteacher of this school is Angela Kinslow. This school is part of Kent Catholic Schools Partnership which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Annemarie Whittle, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Michael Powis.

What is it like to attend this school?

The smallest school on the Isle of Sheppey, St Edward's is a close community where families and the school work together. Although the school is in one of the most deprived areas of the south east, pupils are motivated to do well and improve their life chances. Pupils are welcomed and feel safe and nurtured by the care they receive. They trust the adults around them to support and guide them. Pupils are inclusive and kind. This is a result of the exceptionally strong start they receive in Reception.

The school has clear aspirations for all pupils, many of whom have diverse backgrounds and faiths. In their behaviour and conduct, pupils rise to meet these expectations. Pupils are eager to know more and enjoy learning. However, pupils' achievements in previous key stage 2 published outcomes do not yet match the school's ambition.

Pupils live up to the school's strong Catholic vision and values. These values are supported by trips and experiences that broaden pupils' horizons and give them a sense of ambition. The pupils relish leadership roles like walking the school dog and acting as peer mentors. The school ensures that pupils who are disadvantaged fully benefit from these experiences.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Children have an exceptionally strong start to their education. The majority of children join the setting with some form of disadvantage, but staff are expert at dismantling the barriers to learning. Children joyfully follow well-established routines. Their learning is meticulously planned with a clear purpose. Staff in the setting are experts in developing the language and attention of the children, particularly in their early reading and mathematics. For example, while waiting patiently to use the chalk in a mark-making activity, children practised their phonics without prompting. Staff ensure no child is left behind in the opportunities and activities provided. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve equally well.

Pupils love learning. The curriculum builds incrementally and this builds pupils' confidence. They want to do their best. The school has identified what it wants pupils to know and in what order. For example, in geography, pupils' understanding of their place in the world starts with considering their school, their country and then the wider world. Staff receive meaningful professional development to support their teaching of the curriculum. They adapt their teaching appropriately to help pupils with SEND. Staff check that pupils remember the key vocabulary, but they do not always precisely check pupils' understanding of this language. This means that staff do not use this information to adapt future teaching consistently well. As a result, when paired with the gaps which arose during the COVID-19 pandemic, pupils have not previously achieved as well as they should by the end of key stage 2.

Staff treat reading as a priority. Pupils and staff see reading as not only essential but enjoyable. Pupils' love of reading was evident across all ages. The school has worked successfully to improve engagement with reading outside of school, and rates of home

reading have tripled. Younger pupils benefit from a highly effective phonics programme, which means they are accurate and fluent readers. This is reflected in their positive achievement in the phonics screening check.

Pupils are respectful and kind. The expectations for behaviour are clearly set from the Reception class onwards. Pupils have the language skills to express their feelings and needs. The school has a clear approach to teaching pupils about how to successfully manage their emotions. Pupils focus on their learning in lessons, and there is rarely any disruption. Pupils play conscientiously, with access to a wide range of resources and activities. The school has an effective and coherent approach to attendance.

The school promotes a feeling of community and purpose. It provides carefully chosen experiences that support the curriculum. Pupils gain a broader view of life beyond Sheerness. The school has carefully adapted the programme of assemblies and the personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education curriculum. Staff carefully model the school values of love, respect, and achievement. Pupils throughout the school show these values in their language and actions. The school effectively promotes pupils' physical and mental health.

The school is successfully addressing the previous underachievement. The school and trust have worked closely to ensure that new leaders are trained and supported. Together, they are focused on improving the education of pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. Governors and trustees are well informed and actively challenge and support the school. Staff are well supported with their workload by leaders and are highly committed to the future of the school. The school works for the betterment of all.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff checks of what pupils know and understand do not support learning sufficiently well. This means that some pupils have important gaps in their learning that have not been identified and addressed swiftly enough. As a result, pupils do not acquire the depth of understanding they need to be sufficiently prepared for the next stage of education. The school must ensure that staff consistently and effectively teach the planned curriculum and, in particular, help them to routinely check pupils' understanding of key content and use this to inform future teaching. This will support pupils to know and remember more over time across the full range of subjects.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use Ofsted Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further guidance on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	141386
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341783
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Michael Powis
CEO of the trust	Annemarie Whittle
Headteacher	Angela Kinslow
Website	www.st-edwards-sheerness.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	21 and 22 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Edwards Catholic Primary School is part of the Kent Catholic Schools Partnership. It joined the trust in July 2016.
- This Catholic school is part of the Archdiocese of Southwark. Its last section 48 inspection was in March 2020.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The current headteacher joined the school in September 2024.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form

provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the headteacher, trustees, the CEO, and the governors.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, and geography and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff, and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The views of parents and carers were considered through their responses to Ofsted Parent View and on-site activity. Further views of pupils and staff were gathered through Ofsted's online surveys, interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, governing body and trustee meeting minutes, attendance records and behaviour incident logs.

Inspection team

Toby Martlew, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Catherine Hylands	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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