

English Martyrs' RC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108503
Local Authority	Newcastle Upon Tyne
Inspection number	356376
Inspection dates	29–30 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Graeme Clarke

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	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Thomas Laidler
Headteacher	Mrs Denise Kendall
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. In short visits to parts of lessons and support sessions with individual pupils and in extended visits to 19 lessons; they observed the work of 17 teachers in the school. They examined a variety of examples of pupils' written work. Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, teachers and a group of pupils. They scrutinised the school's child protection and safeguarding documentation, information about the curriculum, development plans, records of pupils' progress and minutes of meetings. They analysed 45 questionnaires from parents and carers, 58 from pupils in Years 3 to 6 and nine from members of staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- How effectively assessments of children's attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage provide a sound basis for judging children's progress.
- The impact of the school's arrangements to support pupils' with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the extent of their progress in class and when supported in small groups or individually.
- How effectively work in lessons meets the needs of pupils of different ability.

Information about the school

The school is a larger than the average size primary school. An above average number of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. A much-lower-than-average proportion of pupils has special educational needs and/or disabilities, with very few having a statement of special educational needs. A large majority of the pupils are White British. A lower than average proportion have a mainly Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi heritage, although the number at an early stage of learning English as an additional language is average. The school has gained Healthy School status and the International Schools Foundation Award.

A local authority Children's Centre – the governance of which lies with the governing body of the school, provides childcare for Early Years Foundation Stage children through a private provider. This has been inspected separately and the report is available on the Ofsted website.

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

English Martyrs' Primary school is caring and welcoming. Under the purposeful leadership of the headteacher, all staff successfully encourage pupils to uphold the school's Catholic values of respect and consideration for others. Since the last inspection, the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved year on year and children now make good progress in the well led and organised facility. Over the same period, pupils' learning and progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 are satisfactory. Over recent years, a majority of pupils leave school with average attainment, although too few, boys particularly, make sufficient progress to gain the highest levels. Good quality care, guidance and support underpin the sound progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those learning English as an additional language. They attain standards similar to their counterparts nationally.

Politeness and good behaviour prevail throughout the school. Effective arrangements safeguard the welfare of pupils so that, in this calm and orderly school, pupils conduct themselves safely and very considerately. Productive partnerships with the church, community organisations and visitors, together with a broad range of interesting visits, widen pupils' horizons and successfully promote good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils play their parts happily and well to support their school, local and wider community in many ways, for example, through extensive charitable work. Of particular note is the success of the school's work with families to improve punctuality and reduce persistent absence.

Teachers plan lessons effectively so that pupils find learning interesting and enjoyable, especially during practical activities. On occasions, class activities do not involve everyone and insufficient time is available for pupils to develop perseverance and independence and so improve their learning when tackling tasks. Pupils' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are not always extended and practised sufficiently through subjects of the curriculum. When marking pupils' work, teachers celebrate pupils' accomplishments and often indicate where pupils can make improvements, although these are not consistently followed through to consolidate pupils' learning. Accurate self-evaluation sets out appropriate priorities for attention. Recent improvements have successfully raised attainment in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress and raise attainment at the higher levels in English and mathematics, especially for boys, by:

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- drawing on the skills and successful approaches some teachers use to increase quality and consistency of teaching throughout the school
 - ensuring that pupils have more time in lessons to consolidate their learning and develop qualities such as perseverance and independence
 - exploiting opportunities for pupils to extend and to practise their reading, writing and numeracy skills widely throughout the curriculum
 - organising class activities in lessons sufficiently well to motivate pupils and enable all to contribute to discussion
 - increasing the usefulness of marking for reinforcing learning by following-up the pointers given to help pupils improve to the next level.
- 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 school and thoroughly enjoy practical activities in lessons, at lunchtime and after school. When activities are interesting, they become engrossed in their task, working responsibly on their own or in small groups. They happily talk about their learning, although in whole-class discussion they are not always as motivated or responsive as they could be. Care over presentation improves as they get older so that both written and number work is legible and neatly set out.

A majority of children enter Nursery with skills and abilities well below those expected for their age. Attainment at the end of Year 2 has been below average in recent years, reflecting pupils' satisfactory progress from their Key Stage 1 starting points. By the end of Year 6 over the same period, the majority of pupils have made satisfactory progress and attained at the level expected nationally. Fewer pupils than anticipated make the good progress needed to reach the highest level. The number of pupils making sufficient progress in both English and mathematics was a little below expectation. Fewer boys than girls make the progress expected of them, but in 2010 boys made better progress than girls in mathematics. Taking pupils' learning, progress and attainment into account, their achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils conduct themselves safely and sensibly in lessons and as they move around inside and around the school. They value the care adults provide and know why procedures for safe conduct should be followed. They say they feel perfectly safe and that any bullying or misbehaviour is dealt with quickly and effectively. Awareness of the importance of diet and involvement in popular after-school physical activities all reflect pupils' awareness of fitness and health and the choices they make at home to improve their well-being. Pupils make an admirable contribution to the school community, for example, the school council has done much to improve the grounds, and more widely to help others less fortunate than themselves.

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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	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory. In the most effective lessons, clear learning intentions are shared with pupils and carefully chosen and well-organised activities are closely matched to pupils' abilities. A lively style, good class management and helpful feedback encourage pupils to respond readily, maintain their interest and work hard. In some lessons, however, attention wanders and learning slows, such as when class discussion is protracted with only a minority taking an active part and group and individual activities are cut short so that pupils do not have sufficient time to consolidate their learning and to develop qualities such as perseverance and independence. Teachers celebrate pupils' accomplishments when marking their work and give them clear pointers for improvement, although they rarely follow them up later to consolidate pupils' learning.

The development of a thematic curriculum is at an early stage of implementation. Pupils have opportunities for developing their basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, although these are not always extended and exploited sufficiently through subjects of the curriculum. Many activities within the curriculum broaden pupils' experiences and promote their personal development such as health and well-being. Visits and visitors make a strong contribution to extending pupils' social skills, and their spiritual and cultural development. Links with other faiths and schools in different settings, locally and farther afield, widen pupils' awareness of life elsewhere and foster community cohesion well.

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In this caring school, considerate relationships and assiduously followed arrangements for safeguarding assure the welfare of all pupils. Procedures for gathering information about pupils' attainments are now diligently followed. This enables leaders to keep a close eye on pupils' development, leading in turn to timely support given to those at risk of underachievement. These recently developed individual teaching arrangements for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, led by skilful teachers and assistants, are improving reading and writing although it is too soon to see their full effect. Through beneficial partnerships with the local authority and health service, the school successfully helps vulnerable pupils develop confidence and make generally sound or, for some, good progress in their work. Good arrangements successfully prepare pupils for moving on from class to class in the school then on to secondary 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?

Senior staff work together as a coherent team and, in their development plans, are committed to improving pupils' progress and in turn to raising standards. Even so, standards have remained broadly average in recent years. Although school leaders are determined to make teaching more effective throughout, its quality, at present, is inconsistent. However, the pool of talented teachers in the school has the collective expertise to help develop the skills of less experienced colleagues. Pupils from many ethnic backgrounds play and work harmoniously together. They thrive because the school is careful to promote equality of opportunity and to prevent discrimination of any kind. Nevertheless, since the time of the last inspection, boys have not done as well as they could, especially in English.

The governing body is well aware of the school's work as a result of informative reports complemented by their own visits to gather information. Procedures for reviewing the school's work fully involve school leaders and the governing body and lead to an accurate evaluation with appropriate priorities set for improvement. The school reaches out well to parents and carers through bulletins, reports and meetings and they feel well-informed about their children's progress and development. Following a thorough analysis, the governing body has assured that the school makes a good contribution to community cohesion and fully deserves its International School Award. The governing body is diligent in ensuring that all measures for safeguarding the welfare of pupils are in place and meet current guidelines. Staff are well-versed in following procedures through good up-to-date training and, furthermore, ensure that through the curriculum pupils are successfully helped to act safely, courteously and considerately.

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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	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children benefit throughout this period of their education. When they join the nursery, a majority of children's skills are well below the expectations for their age in all areas of learning. Improved provision and management in recent years have led to more children leaving the Reception class having made notably good progress, particularly in their mathematical and creative development, although less so in their communication and language skills. Children settle quickly, promptly become engaged in learning and are well behaved. They enjoy learning and play and learn well together or independently.

Skilled staff make very effective use of the well-organised indoor and outdoor facilities to provide a supportive environment in which children feel safe and develop confidence. A good balance of well-arranged activities in all areas of learning blends adult support with activities that children choose for themselves and stimulates their imagination and enjoyment. For example, 'bathing a baby' as part of a theme about 'Ourselves' greatly excited nursery children and led to extensive language development.

In this well led and managed stage of children's education, all staff work and plan effectively together as a coherent team. Effective assessment procedures enable a good match of activities and expectations to children's particular needs and are used well on a day-to-day basis to tailor learning to suit. Key workers have a good knowledge of children's progress and interests and help them develop further. They share information about children's development with parents and carers who, in turn, express a high degree of satisfaction and feel assured about the school's good welfare arrangements for their children.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A lower-than-average proportion of parents and carers returned the questionnaires. Almost all have a very positive view of the school. Everyone feels that the school keeps their child safe, keeps them informed about progress, that their children are well taught and supported and in turn are happy with their experience. Most were happy with other aspects of the school's work. The findings of the inspection generally uphold these views but lead to the judgement that teaching is satisfactory overall. Very few parents and carers wrote comments. Some were very supportive and others voiced personal concerns, for example, about bullying or cleanliness in toilets. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare and they found pupils know how to report any incidents and feel they are dealt with quickly. Inspectors also found that caretaking and cleaning standards are high.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at English Martyrs' 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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 416 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	67	14	31	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	69	13	29	0	0	1	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	47	23	51	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	56	18	40	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	60	16	36	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	24	53	19	42	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	40	26	58	0	0	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)	23	51	20	44	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	42	23	51	0	0	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	36	24	53	3	7	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	33	26	58	2	4	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	18	40	25	56	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	53	20	44	0	0	0	0

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



1 October 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of English Martyrs' RC Primary School, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE5 2SA

My colleagues and I really enjoyed our visit to inspect your school recently. Thank you for helping us when we came to see you in lessons and assemblies. You were very polite and helpful and we did enjoy talking with those of you whom we met. We know your headteacher and all the staff are very proud of you. We were delighted to see how much you enjoy school and how well behaved you are. We were pleased to see how you contribute to school life and in ways to help others.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education. All the adults in the school look after you very well and make good arrangements to keep you safe. In recent years, standards have been average in the English and mathematics tests you all have to take in Year 6. Some of you do not make as much progress as you should. We have asked the school to see if they can help more of you achieve your full potential and for more of you to reach the highest levels. We have asked your school to help more of you to take part in class or group discussions and to give you more time to work in groups or on your own. When we were in lessons and looked at your books, we liked the way your teachers let you know how well you are doing and, when they mark your work, we have asked them to always follow-up their pointers to help you reach the next level of work.

You have many opportunities at English Martyrs' Primary School to learn about life and these help you to prepare for the future. We hope that you all do really well

Yours sincerely

Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector

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