

English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124368
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	359645
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Doris Bell

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	58
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Connell
Headteacher	Helen Butters
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2008
School address	Woodland Street Biddulph, Stoke-on-Trent ST8 6LW
Telephone number	01782 512644
Fax number	01782 512644
Email address	office@englishmartyrs.staffs.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	14–15 March 2011
Inspection number	359645

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons and observed three teachers and a member of the support staff teach. Inspectors also held meetings with parents and carers, groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff, including the executive headteacher and head of school. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including teachers' planning, the raising attainment plans, assessment, monitoring and evaluation records, records for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and safeguarding policies. The responses to the 34 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- What is the rate of progress for pupils currently in the school, and is teaching sufficiently robust to accelerate it and raise standards?
- Are leaders and managers as clear and as well focused on improvement as they need to be?
- How well is the school monitoring and evaluating the reported improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage?

Information about the school

This school is much smaller than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average but in some year groups it is well above. Almost all pupils are of White British origin. The school has undergone many changes in staffing since the previous inspection. It is now part of a collaboration with two other schools, but each has retained its own governing body. An executive headteacher oversees all three schools, and has run English Martyrs since 2008. A head of school was appointed in September 2010, to oversee the school's work on a day-to-day basis. The governing body took over the management of the previously privately run Nursery in 2009. The school also has an on-demand before- and after-school club.

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

This is a satisfactory school. The executive headteacher and head of school have moved the school forward rapidly in the past year. The school is highly reflective, and its self-evaluation is accurate and well founded. The sharply focused raising achievement plans set clear expectations for improved outcomes for pupils. Essential systems, such as those for checking and improving teaching and learning, and assessing and tracking pupils' progress, are now firmly in place and bringing improvement. The head of school has significantly improved provision for Reception children and for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Although her full time class commitment leaves her little time for formal monitoring in the rest of the school, she has provided staff with clear guidance on a number of issues to help improve their practice. As a result, the decline in attainment has been halted, gaps in pupils' learning are being systematically closed, and remaining weaknesses in teaching and other provision are being rigorously tackled. Taking all of the above into account, the school demonstrates satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Achievement is satisfactory and attainment is average in Year 6. While progress is improving in Years 3 to 6, in writing it is too often limited by the over-use of worksheets that prevent pupils writing at length in literacy lessons or in other subjects. Additionally, pupils are not secure enough about their targets and many lack the confidence to take their work further by themselves. This was observed in both English and mathematics lessons where, although learning objectives and success criteria were clearly explained, pupils relied heavily on the teacher for help or for permission to move on, even when they knew what to do. Their independent learning skills are underdeveloped.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is improving because staff work together as a team, act on advice, and help and support each other effectively. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because the work they are given to do takes account of their individual targets, and support staff help them with it. More-able pupils do not always make the faster progress of which they are capable in lessons. Their work is not always challenging enough, because not all teachers make consistently best use of what they know about pupils' prior learning when they plan new work.

Children are making satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but progress is accelerating in Reception because staff use what they know about how well the children are doing to plan more challenges for them. In both Nursery and Reception, there is a shortage of equipment for outdoor learning, and Reception children do not have easy access to a secure outdoor learning area. The curriculum, which is satisfactory overall, has been adapted well to meet the needs of the pupils in the mixed Reception/Year 1/2 class. Pupils report that school is a 'great place to learn' and that 'it is a privilege to mix with children in other years'. They enjoy school, feel safe there, and

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

have a good understanding of the importance of following a healthy lifestyle. Their attendance is above average. All of this, and their sound progress in basic skills, ensure they leave school adequately prepared for the future.

Up to 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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress so that it is consistently good, especially in writing, by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length in different subjects, ensuring they understand and focus on their writing targets
 - involving pupils in checking and improving their own learning, and helping them to become more independent learners.
- Increase the amount of good teaching in the school by:
 - ensuring all teachers make equally good use of the information they have about how well pupils are doing, to plan the next steps in pupils' learning
 - providing consistently challenging work for more-able pupils, and moving them onto it earlier in lessons
 - providing management time for the head of school to monitor teaching and learning and spread good practice throughout the school.
- Implement the plans to improve outdoor provision for Nursery and Reception children, and ensure children have regular, spontaneous access to it.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Attainment on entry varies from year to year because of the small numbers in each year group, but it is mostly as expected for the children's ages when they enter the Reception Year. Pupils' progress is accelerating. Increasing proportions of pupils are on track to meet the challenging targets set for them in each year group, including Year 6. Work in pupils' books, and that seen in lessons, shows that the legacy of underachievement, evident in past data, is being eradicated.

Pupils write in different styles to suit different audiences and purposes. When writing play scripts based on the story of Ali Baba, Year 6 pupils demonstrated a good understanding of how to set them out correctly, with stage directions to set the scene and enhance character development. Spelling is mostly accurate but grammar is sometimes weak. For example, in narrative writing, pupils sometimes mix tenses, or do not write in complete sentences, making their writing hard to read. Without considerable prompting, they do not readily recognise these errors. Work is usually well presented, except when pupils are required to write on worksheets and stick them in their books. It then becomes untidy. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills satisfactorily in different subjects, but they do not always remember their writing targets when they do so. Support staff keep pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities on track to meet their targets. They make a sound contribution to the satisfactory progress these pupils make in lessons.

Behaviour, although satisfactory overall, is becoming increasingly better in lessons, especially when teaching is motivating. Pupils report that there is no bullying in school and

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

say they feel safe there. They know how to avoid dangers, including those associated with using the internet or mobile phones, and they report that issues are quickly sorted out in school when reported. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school community. They are proud of the work done by the relatively new school council in setting up a 'Buddy Stop' to help pupils at break and lunchtime.

Pupils mostly work together well in class when required to do so, but they lack the confidence to take their own learning forward without first asking an adult. They talk positively about the importance of eating fruit and vegetables, praising the school for introducing healthy snacks, and for the amount of sports and exercise activities it provides for them. They are mostly reflective and caring, and they are developing a sound awareness of the different faiths and cultures at home and abroad.

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	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

While overall satisfactory, the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is improving rapidly as subjects are brought together and literacy and numeracy skills are promoted in all work. The good practice of finding out what pupils already know, and planning their learning from this, contributes to the increasingly better progress in this age group. When subjects are brought together in Years 3 to 6, tasks are not always well enough planned to extend learning. This was evident as pupils researched and recorded information about the Second World War using the internet. A good range of visits, visitors and well-attended

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

extra-curricular activities enhance the curriculum and support pupils' learning and personal development.

Most staff have taken on board well the advice and guidance from school leaders and external consultants on how to accelerate pupils' progress. Pupils' learning is assessed and tracked systematically. In the best lessons, the information gained is used effectively in planning, and learning is adapted during the lesson to suit the pupils' changing needs. In English and mathematics, more-able pupils sometimes have to complete too many simple tasks before moving onto the harder work planned for them.

Staff know the pupils and their backgrounds well. They provide good pastoral care and support for pupils and their families, including those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory. The school has a range of policies and procedures to promote good behaviour and effective learning. Their impact is beginning to be seen but implementation varies from class to class. As a result the overall care, guidance and support pupils receive are satisfactory.

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	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The executive headteacher is driving the school forward and, along with the head of school, is successfully bringing about improvements that are accelerating pupils' progress and raising their attainment. Challenging targets have been set, and decisive action has been taken to achieve them. Although relatively new, the collaboration of schools is already moving towards mutual support for each other, sharing professional development and good practice.

Governance is satisfactory. The governing body supports the school well but has not in the past held it to account sufficiently for its outcomes. It has reviewed its policies and procedures to ensure it challenges the school and supports improvement. It is now meeting its responsibilities in greater depth through training and by meeting with the governing bodies from the other two schools.

Safeguarding policies and procedures, including those for child protection, meet current requirements, and all training is up to date. Parents and carers all say the school keeps their children safe. The school's partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. It is improving as the school involves them more in their children's learning and in school improvement. The partnerships with external agencies are satisfactory. They contribute particularly to the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

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

The school has due regard for equality of opportunity. It works hard to eliminate discrimination of any sort but has more to do to ensure that all groups of pupils make equally good progress in learning. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. It has a good understanding of its own context and that of the community it serves. Through its work in religious education, it introduces pupils to different faiths, cultures and backgrounds in the United Kingdom and abroad.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and management have considerably improved provision and progress in the past year. Children learn and develop satisfactorily and their progress is accelerating. Marked improvements to the curriculum mean that children are now engaged in purposeful activities that, as the school's records show, are rapidly improving their achievement. Good links with parents and carers contribute to children's learning and enable them to settle quickly into the well-established routines. Some Nursery children are reluctant to leave their parents and carers, but gentle persuasion by the staff soon has them curious about what others are doing, and they slowly join in.

Children readily take part in the many exciting activities prepared for them, for example, describing and labelling their dinosaur habitats and counting pebbles used as dinosaur eggs. Phonics work is used effectively to develop early reading and writing skills in all activities. Children enjoy writing and counting, and discussing their work with others. They show initiative in their learning as they select activities or work with adults. In Reception, adults are mostly skilled at knowing when to intervene in activities to move learning on. Opportunities are missed to do this in the Nursery, especially in outdoor activities. Children learn to care for each other and for their environment. They enjoy working outside but

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

limited resources and lack of space, especially for Reception children, mean they cannot do so spontaneously.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was higher than in most primary schools. Parents acknowledge there have been 'many improvements recently'. They say they are 'impressed' with the progress their children are making, that their children enjoy school and the school keeps them safe. Parents and carers also like the way older and younger pupils mix together, and pupils, too, appreciate this. Inspectors found relationships to be good, and the school improving. A small number of parents and carers are concerned that the executive headteacher has taken on too much with three schools. Inspectors found that the school has a head of school to support the executive headteacher, but that she needs more time to fulfil her management responsibilities.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at English Martyrs' Catholic 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 58 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	68	9	26	2	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	68	11	32	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	59	11	32	2	6	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	50	15	44	2	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	12	35	21	62	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	44	18	53	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	26	23	68	1	3	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)	13	38	19	56	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	35	19	56	3	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	35	18	53	1	3	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	47	14	41	2	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	53	12	35	4	12	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	53	14	41	2	6	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



16 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, Biddulph, ST8 6LW

Thank you very much for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed talking to you about what you do there. As you know, we came to see how well you were all doing and what the school could do better to help you make faster progress. It was good to hear that you enjoy school and find it a privilege to mix with pupils of different ages. We noted your good attendance and your good understanding of why it is important to follow a healthy lifestyle. You told us you know how to keep yourselves safe, including when using the internet or mobile phones.

We judged your school as satisfactory but found that those responsible for leading and managing it are working hard to make it better and to accelerate your progress. We have suggested some things to help them in this. They are to.

- give all of you more opportunities to write at length, and teach you how to take more responsibility for your own learning
- make sure that all of you always have hard enough work to do, and that your head of school has more time to check that all staff are doing everything possible to increase your rates of progress
- give Nursery and Reception children more opportunities to learn outside as well as indoors.

We hope that by doing these things, you will go on to reach higher standards in your work. You can help by paying attention to what your teachers tell you, by doing your corrections, and by using the guidance you are given to improve your own learning.

We hope you will continue to enjoy learning for the rest of your lives, and we wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely

Doris Bell

Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.