

English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120228
Local Authority	Rutland
Inspection number	379982
Inspection dates	4–5 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Linda Killman HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joe Scott
Headteacher	Sue Hooley
Date of previous school inspection	21 January 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector. Inspectors observed nine lessons taught by five different teachers. Meetings were held with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at all the documentation for safeguarding, a sample of other policies, the school's data, the school's self-evaluation and its plans for improvement. Questionnaires received from 49 parents and carers 48 pupils and eight staff were analysed and taken into account. The school is federated with a Catholic primary school in a different local authority. Separate inspection teams inspected both schools simultaneously.

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

- Inspectors checked the progress pupils are making in English and mathematics, focusing particularly on the most-able pupils.
- The team evaluated the effectiveness of the school's strategies to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Inspectors appraised the contribution leaders and managers at all levels are making in rapidly driving forward and securing improvement through the federation.
- The team examined the school's arrangements for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its pupils.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than the average primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage; a very small minority speaks English as an additional language. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are below national averages. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school during the school year is higher than is typical nationally. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are taught in mixed-age classes covering two year groups. A hard federation with Saint Augustine's Catholic Primary School in Stamford was formed in January 2011. The headteacher spends equal time between both schools which share one governing body. The school has achieved the Activemark and Healthy Schools status.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This school has improved significantly since it was last inspected. It is now a good school in most respects. It has focused determinedly on improving the quality of teaching and learning with considerable success. The headteacher is particularly skilled at coaching staff, so that they develop good practice in teaching and perform as confident leaders and managers in their areas of responsibility. Her precision in making astute judgements about the quality of teaching and learning underpins the impressive shift in performance. Adults have a delightful rapport with the pupils and create a positive climate for productive learning in classrooms. Effective teaching coupled with pupils' good behaviour and attitudes are the striking features influencing their good achievement.

Attainment is broadly average but a pattern of improvement is evident. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and make good progress from their starting points. The most-able pupils are the group that has yet to excel. A carefully-structured and innovative curriculum meets the needs of almost all groups of pupils. It captures their interests and fires their enthusiasm to learn. However, the more-able pupils are capable of taking on a higher level of challenge and difficulty, especially in English and mathematics.

At all levels leadership and management demonstrate ambition and drive to move the school forward. Self-evaluation is accurate but centred too strongly around provision rather than pupils' learning. Plans for improvement, although fit for purpose, lack a similar focus and timescales are generally too broad to effect change rapidly. The governing body understands its statutory responsibilities and ensures that they are met. Nonetheless, monitoring of policies, systems and procedures to promote pupils' health, safety and welfare is insufficiently rigorous. Firm foundations have been laid for the federation with staff realising its potential and keen to develop partnership work. Initiatives, such as sharing leadership roles, are in the early stages of development and it is too soon to measure their impact. Areas for improvement identified in the school's last inspection have been tackled systematically and effectively: the school's overall effectiveness has moved from satisfactory to good as a result. The school demonstrates its good capacity to improve by its good track record in improving provision and outcomes for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in all year groups by providing sufficient challenge for the

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most-able in lessons, so that by July 2013 it is above average in English and mathematics.

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that policies, systems and procedures to promote pupils' health, safety and welfare are rigorously applied, monitored and recorded
 - ensuring that improvement planning identifies clear, measurable outcomes of pupils' learning with checks set at regular intervals to monitor success
 - developing work across the federation to improve provision and outcomes ensuring that leadership is shared equitably.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Boys' and girls' achievement is good. Last year, the very large majority made more progress than is typical for their ages. Attainment is rising rapidly as a result. For example, it is already significantly above average in reading by the end of Year 2. The accelerated progress that most pupils are now making in Years 3 to 6 is moving their attainment ever closer to the above average range. Pupils develop as confident, happy learners. In lessons, they work effectively independently, in pairs and in larger groups, focusing clearly on the learning objectives; they know what they are learning and are mindful of their targets to improve.

Inspectors watched pupils arrive in the morning with a spring in their step in anticipation of the memorable learning experiences awaiting them in class. Most say that they enjoy school and this contributes to their consistently above-average attendance and good attitudes. Their behaviour is good, especially in lessons. There is a general consensus of opinion among pupils that occasionally behaviour in the playground can be boisterous but adults step in quickly to 'sort it out'. Particularly impressive is the way that pupils settle so quickly to their learning after energetic physical activity, off-site visits and breaks.

Pupils have a clear view of what constitutes bullying. They say that it is extremely rare and no-one could recall a racist incident. Their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development contributes to their willingness to appreciate diversity and show tolerance towards each other. Different groups of pupils say they feel safe and they generally understand potential dangers. They understand the importance of regular exercise and a balanced diet to stay healthy. Older pupils know about the harmful effects of smoking, drug taking and regular use of alcohol. Pupils of all ages take part in a wide range of physical activities and clubs. Some have advanced their skills so well that they attend county clubs for netball, dance and gymnastics. Pupils make a good contribution to the community through participation in local events, charitable work and fund-raising activities that they initiate and organise responsibly. They contribute to decision-making over purchases for outdoor play and interior decorations. Pupils emerge as confident and mature young people by the end of Year 6, with good skills and personal qualities to serve them well in their future lives.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good across the school; occasionally it is outstanding. Learning is set in real-world contexts and links are made between subjects whenever possible, promoting pupils' understanding of its relevance. Stimuli and resources are carefully selected to fascinate pupils and make lessons engaging. In an outstanding numeracy lesson, pupils in Year 2 learnt how to convert tally charts into pictograms based on their chosen ingredients for 'George's Marvellous Medicine'. In the hall, they created an enormous pictogram placing their life-sized digital portraits in the correct column according to the data. Back in the classroom, pupils devised their own pictograms with varying levels of support matched precisely to their abilities. The dialogue between the teacher and the pupils was consistently of a high quality ensuring that they made exceptional progress. All teachers visibly enjoy teaching as much as the pupils enjoy learning. Sometimes tasks set for the more-able pupils to work through independently, and teachers' questioning, are not always open-ended enough to challenge their thinking fully. Teaching assistants provide good support and timely intervention for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they enjoy success in lessons. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, providing encouraging comments and helpful guidance to help them improve.

The curriculum is designed to excite and inspire with high appeal to boys and girls. Enrichment opportunities are varied; they are enjoyed by pupils and have a high

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

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take-up. Curriculum planning is based on teachers’ accurate assessment of pupils’ prior attainment. It aims to meet the needs of different groups so that all pupils are challenged. In practice, learning for the most-able pupils is broken down into small steps when they are capable of striding ahead and this restricts their progress.

Care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory rather than good. This is because the arrangements for ensuring their health and safety are adequate but there are inconsistencies in how well the school applies and monitors its systems, policies and procedures. Good-quality pastoral care lies at the heart of the school’s ethos. The school develops bespoke programmes and support packages to help potentially vulnerable pupils overcome their difficulties. Pupils new to the school settle in quickly; assessment of their knowledge, skills and understanding is timely. Steps taken by the school have been effective in maintaining above-average attendance. A few families take holidays in term time which prevents attendance from being higher but the school rightly considers each application on its merit and does not authorise absence routinely.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides the school with clear direction generating a sense of purpose. At all levels leaders drive and secure improvement most notably in assuring good-quality teaching and learning. Morale is high and staff are keen to improve; they are passionate about pupils’ achievement. The school provides good value for money. The school interior is clean, bright and maintained well: spaces for play and learning outdoors are inviting.

Parents and carers are confident that their children are kept safe in school. Arrangements to safeguard pupils are satisfactory but the documentation is not always updated regularly enough. Assessments of risks are undertaken by staff and the governing body. However, when potential hazards are identified they are not always acted upon quickly enough. The school is inclusive and tackles any discrimination determinedly; the performance of groups is tracked carefully to ensure equality of opportunity. The school acknowledges that there is more work to do to further raise the achievement of the more-able pupils.

Work is in progress to promote community cohesion. A satisfactory set of actions has been identified. Members of the governing body operate as cohesive team intent on

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the federation’s success. Challenges bought by the federation such as working across two local authorities with different systems and procedures, are gradually being resolved. Already the federation has proved effective in bringing together pupils of both schools enabling them to share and compare their experiences. There is some way to go before the federation is in a position to demonstrate its impact on provision and outcomes. The school has a generally positive relationship with parents and carers although there remains work to do to convince some of them of the advantages that the federation offers; the governing body is working hard to communicate these effectively. Subject leaders monitor the curriculum carefully to ensure pupils’ full entitlement to the National Curriculum and to raise standards. They are engaging with the partner school enthusiastically, recognising the potential of joint working.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

In its last inspection the Early Years Foundation Stage was judged good. It still is. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals from their individual starting points. Systems to accurately assess children’s attainment are effective. Children’s skills, knowledge and abilities on entry vary widely and are occasionally below expectations for four-year-olds. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of Reception is above the national average. This represents good progress in all six areas of learning, especially in their personal development, language and literacy skills.

Good teamwork is evident in Reception. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn. They plan jointly and prepare engaging tasks and activities that children enjoy. Provision for play indoors and outside is good, covering all six areas

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of learning required in the curriculum. Adults move seamlessly between their roles as educators, carers and play partners to ensure that children are supported well in both adult-directed and child-initiated activities so they develop as confident and happy learners.

The children learn in a safe environment and all welfare requirements are met fully. Good relationships are fostered between home and school through home visits and regular contact with parents and carers. Leadership has been consistently effective over time regardless of changes in staffing. There is ambition to move the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage from good to outstanding. Support from the local authority has been brokered and visits made by staff to see exemplary practice in other schools to support the school in achieving this challenging target.

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

The proportion of responses to the questionnaire is above that typical for a primary school. The table below shows a high level of satisfaction among parents and carers. A very few individual concerns were raised. While preserving anonymity, inspectors discussed these with leadership and management. They were taken seriously and the school showed willingness to resolve them swiftly.

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 49 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 101 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	86	6	12	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	84	7	14	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	32	65	15	31	1	2	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	49	22	45	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	35	71	13	27	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	30	61	17	35	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	71	14	29	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)	30	61	16	33	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	30	61	16	33	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	57	18	37	3	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	53	20	41	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	57	18	37	3	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	36	73	11	22	1	2	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



6 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, Oakham LE15 6EH

Thank you for your contribution to your school's recent inspection. Special thanks go to those of you who completed questionnaires or spoke directly with me. I learnt a lot about the school from watching you at work and play. I was impressed with your politeness and good manners.

I found that yours is a good school. You study interesting topics and enjoy learning. This, together with your good behaviour, is contributing to your good achievement. Your teachers are good at their job. They work hard to prepare work that interests you. They bring in objects like shiny balloons filled with helium and artefacts from museums that fascinate you. They also try to make sure that your work is pitched at the right level. It is for most of you but I think that some of you could reach even higher levels and have asked your teachers set work that is even more challenging.

Your school has moved from satisfactory to good since it was last inspected. You have played a huge part in making this happen because you are keen to learn; you listen to your teachers carefully and work hard. You reach the standards expected of you for your ages in English and mathematics. I am sure that some of you can improve on this and reach even higher levels. I have asked the school to make this happen within the next two years. I know that the school helps to keep you safe and healthy but I want the school's leaders and managers to check that arrangements are working smoothly more often. I also want changes for the better to happen more quickly.

I have enjoyed learning about your school's federation with St Augustine's. Some of you have already spent time together with pupils in your partner school. Your teachers are excited about this new partnership and we hope that you are too. We have asked the governing body to consider even more ways of strengthening links between the two schools.

It was a pleasure to meet you and I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Linda Killman
Her Majesty's Inspector

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