

# English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

Evelyn Road, Birmingham, B11 3JW

**Inspection dates** 11–12 December 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- There is not enough good and outstanding teaching to make sure that boys as well as girls make good progress in literacy and reach the standards expected of them by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils do not always have enough support to express themselves clearly in correct spoken and written English.
- As pupils become able to read more words, progress for many is held back because they do not know the meaning of enough of the words they read.
- The rules of grammar are taught well, but teaching in some other aspects of writing, including presentation, is not as consistent.
- Support for children's learning as they play in Reception is not always effective, particularly at helping boys to improve their language and communication skills.
- Some lessons do not sustain all pupils' interest or make the more-able pupils think hard. As a result, some pupils, usually boys, become disengaged.
- Support for pupils learning English as an additional language is good at the early stages but not so effective for more advanced learners.

### The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher leads the school well and has the wholehearted support of other leaders and managers, parents and staff in her work to raise achievement and improve teaching.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and children of all faiths feel equally valued.
- Behaviour is good and pupils feel safe and happy and are keen to learn.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics because it is taught well.
- In the Reception classes, adult-led activities support children's learning well.
- Governors know the school very well and challenge the headteacher to continue improving provision.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 20 lessons and, in addition, made a number of shorter visits to lessons. Many of these activities were undertaken alongside members of the senior management team.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in lessons, around the school and at playtimes, and held a meeting with a group of older pupils.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents, including the school's plans for improvement, and policies about keeping pupils safe. They also examined the work in pupils' books, and a range of data about their progress.
- The inspectors held discussions with teachers, the headteacher, two members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Too few parents responded to the Parent View website to allow inspectors to analyse their views. However, inspectors talked with parents at the start of the school day and took into account the views expressed in questionnaires sent out previously by the school. They also considered the views expressed in 36 questionnaires returned by members of staff.

## Inspection team

Peter Kerr, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Mary Maybank	Additional Inspector
Elaine Stevens	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a large primary school.
- Nearly all the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mostly Pakistani, Indian or Bangladeshi, and most speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action (pupils who need extra help with their learning) is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus (pupils who also receive help from outside the school), or who have a statement of special educational needs, is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is much higher than the national average. In this school, this funding supports pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. There are no looked after pupils at the school.
- The school met the government's current floor standards in 2013, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.
- The headteacher has been in post since April 2012 and the deputy headteacher since September 2012.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that all groups of pupils – particularly boys – make faster progress and reach higher standards in literacy by:
  - making sure that teaching in the Reception classes helps all children, especially boys, to improve their communication and literacy skills effectively
  - raising expectations for the quality of pupils' spoken English in lessons and providing more opportunities and support for them to speak accurately and at length
  - giving pupils who are at advanced stages of learning English more structured support to extend their vocabulary and improve their understanding of what they read, particularly when they read independently
  - raising expectations for the quality of presentation of pupils' written work and giving them more consistent support to write accurately and at length
  - providing more reading material and classroom activities to motivate and encourage boys.
- Raise levels of attainment for more-able pupils by:
  - making sure that they are always made to think hard in lessons
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to undertake extended research and present their findings.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Boys achieve significantly less well than girls in English. They make slower progress over time in speaking, reading and writing. Their attainment is below average and was significantly below that of girls in 2013.
- When they join the school in Reception, children's starting points are typically below the expected level for their age. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average overall, because of the good progress made by girls.
- Children learn well in Reception when taught in small groups. Sometimes, the children learn well during play activities, for example when writing letters to Santa, but on other occasions some children, particularly boys, play aimlessly because the activities lack a clear purpose.
- Standards in mathematics are consistently higher than in English and there is less difference in mathematics between the achievement of boys and girls. Extra support for more-able pupils in mathematics helped those who left in 2013 to make good progress, and reach above average standards. Far fewer more-able pupils made good progress in reading and writing, contributing to slower overall progress and lower attainment in English.
- The school has taken steps to boost girls' self-confidence and this has had the desired effect of motivating them and improving their learning. Boys sometimes make less effort, particularly in literacy lessons, because of a lack of interest in the work set.
- The school strongly encourages reading and more than 70 per cent of pupils now use the local library. Pupils enjoy reading and talking about the books they like, but too often their progress is held back by not knowing the meaning of key words.
- Pupils' spoken English improves well in the early stages of learning English because of skilled support from teachers and teaching assistants. The majority of pupils, who are advanced bilingual learners, do not improve their spoken language rapidly enough because they do not have consistent challenge and support to do this independently.
- Learning observed in lessons and the work in pupils' books demonstrate good progress in writing in some year groups, particularly in Year 6. Progress is uneven across the school, however, and expectations for the quality of presentation of written work are not consistent.
- In the best mathematics lessons, pupils improve their spoken English by explaining to the teacher and class how they solve problems. When expectations for pupils' to explain their thinking are low, lessons in mathematics and other subjects do not contribute sufficiently to the improvement of communication skills.
- There are no significant differences in attainment and progress between pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds. Pakistani pupils, who form the great majority in the school, reach higher standards and make better progress than this group nationally. Their attainment and progress do not differ significantly from their classmates.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils in the school. Like their classmates, they make faster progress in mathematics, but much slower progress in reading. Their overall progress rates are not significantly different from similar

pupils nationally.

- Pupils achieved expected levels in the national tests in the sounds that letters make (phonics) in Year 1, which represents good progress from their starting points. In 2013, pupils at the end of Year 6 reached above average standards in grammar, punctuation and spelling. This is the result of good teaching in these aspects of English.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional support and resources for pupils who are eligible. This has resulted in these pupils making better progress than other pupils and the gap in attainment is, therefore, closing. In 2013, their attainment was two terms behind that of their classmates in reading and mathematics, and six months behind in writing.

### **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because not enough lessons contribute strongly to the development of pupils' reading skills and their spoken and written English.
- In some of the lessons that require improvement, teachers do not give enough time for pupils to take part in discussion, and so they do not make as much progress in improving their spoken English as they might. In the good lessons seen, both teachers and teaching assistants did this well.
- Reading lessons promote good learning when pupils have plenty of opportunities to talk with adults about what they read. Teaching assistants were observed giving very effective support to pupils to improve their reading. Pupils often make less progress when they read on their own because they have not been taught a wide enough range of methods to find out for themselves the meaning of words they do not understand.
- In the best writing lessons, teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to speak at length and support them to improve their spoken sentences before they write them down. In less effective lessons, incorrect or incomplete sentences are too readily accepted and expectations are not high enough for the standard of presentation of written work.
- Teachers use educational visits well to widen pupils' experiences. Year 3 pupils, for example, talked enthusiastically and in detail about their new knowledge of ancient Egyptian culture gleaned from a visit to the city museum. They knew that the Egyptians valued the heart more than the brain, and took great delight in describing how the brains were taken out of a body before mummification.
- Some lessons do not meet the needs of more-able pupils well because they are not given enough challenge. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to carry out research or choose how best to present their findings.
- Teaching is consistently good in mathematics. Teachers are confident in teaching the subject and are effective in helping pupils to make good progress from their starting points. Teaching is good for the more-able pupils in the lessons in which they are taught separately.
- Good and outstanding teaching in religious education strongly supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In an outstanding lesson, pupils were helped to gain insights into spiritual and moral values, for example to love one another as we love ourselves. As one pupil said, 'When tears drop, I will wipe them'.

- Effective support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs enables them to make at least as good progress as other pupils in the school. The inclusion manager works effectively with teachers, teaching assistants and outside agencies to ensure work is closely matched to their learning needs. Good progress was observed when these pupils were supported by teachers and teaching assistants during the inspection. Along with their classmates, however, their progress has not been rapid enough in reading and writing to enable them to make up lost ground quickly enough up to this point.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The school is a very friendly, welcoming and calm place in which to learn. Pupils behave well around the school and are polite and respectful to one another and to adults. Behaviour in lessons is nearly always good. Pupils from the school are commended on their behaviour on educational visits.
- Pupils are very keen to learn. When they are challenged to find things out for themselves, they do so enthusiastically to good effect. For example, Year 5 pupils planned an iron-rich menu from their own research on the internet then quickly discovered, when challenged by the teacher, that vitamin C helps the body to absorb iron. They were proud of their success.
- Pupils are very confident that the school cares for them and keeps them safe. They have a good understanding about how to reduce risk to themselves in a range of situations both within and beyond school, including when using the internet.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take and know that members of staff will deal quickly with incidents that arise. They say that bullying is very rare and school records confirm this.
- Within lessons and in the playground, relationships are very positive. Pupils work and play together exceptionally well. Pupils from all ethnic and religious backgrounds get on very well together and enjoy learning about each other's cultural traditions.
- The school places considerable emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have an excellent understanding of different faiths and beliefs. This was evident in discussions with older pupils who were either Muslim or Christian and could give many examples of how the two religions are alike.
- Pupils are proud of the contributions that they make to the life of the school, for example, as school councillors, prefects or representing the school as members of a team. They are also proud of the work they do for charity and within the local community.
- Attendance has improved and is currently in line with the average for primary schools. This is as a result of a clear policy and thorough procedures which have been communicated regularly and effectively to pupils and parents. Punctuality has improved because of recent measures, including 'yellow cards', that remind pupils and their parents of the importance of getting to school on time.
- A small number of pupils are persistently absent. These are predominantly recent arrivals from other countries whose parents take them on visits there during term time. The school is working hard to ensure that these families conform to its high expectations for attendance.

**The leadership and management are good**

- The new headteacher has brought a new sense of direction to the school and the school development plan accurately identifies the main priorities for improvement. Strongly supported by the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher, she has clearly communicated her aims and objectives to staff, governors and parents. She has already eradicated some underperformance, improved the overall quality of teaching and raised the achievement in mathematics.
- Effective measures have been taken to share the responsibility for leadership and school improvement among staff and governors, who feel empowered by the trust placed in them. They feel better informed and more able and confident to contribute.
- Re-invigorated leadership in mathematics has led to better teaching, more rapid progress and higher achievement, particularly for more-able pupils. Improved leadership in reading has led to increased enthusiasm among pupils and closer involvement of parents in supporting their children to read. The impact on pupils' progress is not yet as evident in reading as in writing because of the lost ground to be made up in widening pupils' vocabulary so that they can develop higher order reading skills.
- The headteacher and senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and give useful feedback to teachers on how to improve pupils' learning. As a result, teachers feel that they are well supported in their work. This has led to more exciting lessons, particularly those following educational visits, and improving grades in the school's evaluation of teaching.
- The headteacher sets clear expectations for teachers to meet any targets for improvement set for them and takes decisive measures to eradicate any underperformance. A sharper analysis of data on pupils' performance has enabled staff and governors to identify more accurately those groups that are at risk of underachieving. This had added impetus to the school's drive to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunity to succeed and to avoid any discrimination. Measures put in place have not yet had time to feed through to test results for all groups.
- The new leadership team has revitalised the curriculum and increased pupils' enthusiasm for learning. Among the effective measures taken are regular educational visits to the locality and further afield, giving pupils a better understanding of their local area, the city they live in and the wider world.
- The additional sport funding (provided by the government to all primary schools) has been used by the school to employ specialist sports coaches. As well as working directly with the children, they help teachers to develop their confidence and subject knowledge in physical education.
- The local authority provides light touch support for the school. It rightly considers that it has many strengths and a good capacity to remedy remaining weaknesses, as these have now been identified clearly and accurately due to improved leadership and management.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are well informed about the school's work. They provide a good balance of support and challenge to the headteacher and senior leaders.
  - The governors' understanding of how well pupils are achieving has improved since the previous inspection because the headteacher closely involves them in the work of the school. They know how well pupils are progressing and know how to use the available data on pupils' achievement to compare how well the school is performing in relation to schools nationally.
  - The governing body makes sure that performance management systems are in place and that

the performance of staff is linked to the pay they receive and management responsibilities.

- The budget is managed effectively and governors are aware of how the pupil premium is being spent to support eligible pupils' progress and the impact on their attainment.
- Governors have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities and undertake necessary training. They keep a close check on the progress made in implementing the school's development plan.
- Governors ensure that the school meets requirements for safeguarding.



## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103425
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	428938

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	407
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Patrick Gilsean
<b>Headteacher</b>	Evelyn Harper
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 March 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4643150
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