

English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

Evelyn Road, Birmingham B11 3JW

Inspection dates	19–20 January 2016
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- As a result of the headteacher's inspirational leadership, there is a relentless drive to continuously improve all aspects of the school. As a result, rapid improvements are evident in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement over the last two years. Compared with their starting points, pupils achieve highly.
- The headteacher is strongly supported by an effective deputy headteacher, highly knowledgeable governors and by staff at every level.
- Staff are dedicated and hard working. They are committed to continuously improving their practice. Consequently, teaching is consistently good, and is often outstanding. Pupils make faster progress than that seen in other primary schools.
- This is a school where every minute counts. Learning begins as soon as pupils arrive at school. Teachers inspire pupils to do well and encourage them to be curious and fascinated learners.
- Pupils really enjoy school because learning is characterised by interesting, relevant and fun activities. They feel safe and well cared for. This is reflected in pupils' rapidly improving attendance.
- Pupils' behaviour is superb. They are self-motivated to be friendly, show good manners and demonstrate high levels of self-discipline when not directly supervised by adults.
- Early years provision is outstanding. Children make rapid progress and are very well prepared to start Year 1.
- The strong teaching of the Catholic faith is exceptionally well balanced with meaningful learning about other faiths and beliefs. This leads to a caring, tolerant atmosphere in school where everyone is valued for who they are and what they can do.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils develop a keen understanding of the world they live in.
- The school works very effectively to support all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. All pupils, whatever their background, age or ability, flourish and learn very well.
- Pupils have extensive opportunities to practise their writing skills in subjects other than English. Opportunities to apply mathematical skills in different contexts is less well developed.
- The governing body is highly effective, committed and ambitious for the pupils. Governors do not shy away from challenging leaders about the progress of pupils, particularly those who are most able, disadvantaged or have special educational needs.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop the range of opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in different subjects and contexts.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The significant improvements evident in the school since the last inspection are as a result of the headteacher's inspirational leadership. She has identified and developed a strong and effective group of leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and administrative and site staff. Together they have worked relentlessly to make sure that pupils have a highly organised, safe and vibrant environment in which they can learn more quickly and achieve higher standards than ever before. She has galvanised the whole staff team to share a vision of excellence and high aspirations for the pupils of English Martyrs'.
- As a result of carefully planned training, coaching and opportunities for staff to visit other schools, teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Leaders make frequent checks on the quality of teaching and give staff helpful advice on how to improve further.
- Teachers who have additional responsibilities have benefited from high-quality coaching and training. They are acutely aware of the quality of teaching and progress of pupils in their areas of responsibility because their monitoring is frequent and thorough. They work well together as a team to develop consistent practice throughout the school. As a result of their work, rapid or sustained improvements are evident. For example, marking is of equally high quality in all curriculum subjects.
- The curriculum has been carefully thought out to ensure that it is relevant to the pupils in the school. The range of subjects and topics pupils study is comprehensive and well balanced. It is exceptionally well enhanced by trips, visitors to the school, assemblies and links with the local community. For example, Year 6 pupils provide computing lessons for more mature members of the community and Reception pupils bake biscuits to raise money for homeless people in the local area.
- Pupils are very well prepared to take up their place in British society. Through topics such as 'The Greeks' and 'London', pupils learn about democracy and Parliament. As a result of opportunities to have a voice within the school and by learning about Unicef's Convention on the Rights of the Child, they understand the importance of freedom of speech. Pupils experience three trips a year, one in the immediate locality of the school, one to Birmingham and one further afield. This is effective in promoting their understanding of the diversity of the country in which they live.
- The faith-based teaching of the school is skilfully balanced with learning about those of other faiths and those of no faith. The school is uncompromising in its inclusivity. Assemblies and Mass promote the similarities between the different faiths. This is highly effective in building respect and understanding among this diverse school population. Pupils are valued for who they are and discrimination or prejudice based on faith or any other characteristic is not tolerated. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at this school is exemplary.
- The pupil premium funding has been used to provide eligible pupils with precisely targeted support. Graduate teaching assistants have been employed to provide specialist literacy and mathematical support. This has been highly effective and these pupils make similar to and often better progress than their classmates.
- The sports funding has been spent well. A significantly increased proportion of pupils take part in sporting events and competitions, an increased number of sporting clubs take place after school and pupils are more active at lunchtimes as a result of organised games.
- The local authority has provided limited support for this school since the last inspection.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body is highly effective. Governors know the school exceptionally well and, like the staff and pupils, they are extremely proud of it. Governors regularly spend time in school to find out what is happening for themselves. They give the school excellent support and regularly ask school leaders searching questions about the school's effectiveness.
 - Governors make sure that very effective performance management systems are in place to ensure that teachers and the headteacher fully meet their responsibilities and targets. They have an excellent understanding of information on pupils' progress and use this to check that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and supported with additional funding, are making high levels of progress. They ask questions about the use of the sports funding to ensure that it is used appropriately and is making a difference to pupils' health and well-being.

- Governors take part in relevant training and this helps them to carry out their roles effectively and keep up to date with current requirements.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Pupils' safety is treated with the utmost importance. Procedures to recruit staff safely are well embedded. All staff have been thoroughly trained to identify pupils at risk of harm, including those at risk of child sexual exploitation, forced marriage and potential radicalisation. Any concerns raised by staff are taken seriously and recorded in detail. Where necessary, other agencies are involved to provide additional support and advice.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Leaders have been successful in significantly improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection. Pupils make outstanding progress in English and mathematics because the impact of teaching over time is excellent. Teachers are committed to improving their own practice and are focused on maximising pupils' progress and ensuring that pupils, whatever their background, age or ability, flourish and learn very well.
- Teachers have very high expectations of pupils, constantly demanding more of them and challenging them to work at a fast pace. This is because teachers know what pupils are capable of. Pupils know exactly how to improve their work and correct any errors because teachers provide frequent and precise written and oral feedback. Pupils are keen to improve their work and are positive about learning from their mistakes. Pupils thrive on the challenges they are given. As one child said, 'my work is always tricky but the adults are here to help me to realise I can do it'. As a result of this, progress is significantly accelerated.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have excellent relationships with pupils and know their classes well. They ask pupils carefully chosen questions to keep them engrossed, to consolidate learning and to challenge their thinking by encouraging them to explain their answers. They also use questions well to check pupils' understanding and ensure that everyone is clear about what is expected of them.
- Learning starts from the moment that pupils arrive at school – no time is wasted. Pupils settle exceptionally quickly to their 'SODA' (start of day activities) and additional adults begin supporting individual pupils with reading skills from 8.45am. During mathematics in Year 6, pupils have a 'walking-in task', which they settle down to immediately while the adults support individual pupils to correct errors or extend learning from the previous lesson. This is highly effective in ensuring pupils make rapid progress.
- Additional adults are used very well to support learning throughout the school. Teaching assistants are an integral part of the teaching team. They are skilled and their support is effective and carefully used for maximum effect. They give excellent guidance and support, and extend pupils' learning in all parts of lessons, including small-group and one-to-one sessions.
- Excellent learning habits are developed starting from Reception, where children learn to keep trying even when tasks are difficult and take joy from learning to do something new. Children are already making choices and taking responsibility for their learning. This continues throughout the school, and pupils universally demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. An example of this is the great care with which pupils present their work and organise their workbooks.
- In Reception Year, children learn very quickly to answer in full sentences rather than giving one-word answers. This helps them to extend their vocabulary. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to experiment with adventurous words when speaking and when writing. As a result, pupils' writing is lively and interesting to read.
- All pupils get regular and meaningful homework. They are encouraged to present their work well and take pride in what they do. For example, when they showed inspectors their alternative designs for, and models of, the Eiffel Tower and the beautifully presented projects about a country that interested them, pupils were bursting with pride.
- Pupils apply their writing skills in a range of subjects, for example religious education and geography. This helps pupils to practise and refine their skills. The quality of their writing in these subjects is of the same high quality as seen in their English lessons. While mathematics skills are sometimes applied in other subjects, for example science, this is less well developed.
- The teaching of reading is precise and highly effective. Children in Reception quickly grasp how letters make sounds and how sounds can be made into words. Pupils practise their reading skills in a range of subjects and as a result they quickly become confident to tackle unfamiliar words.

- Teaching provides many opportunities to develop the outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness of children through the encouragement of small-group work, debates and discussions, the content of lessons and the positive working environment. Teachers and teaching assistants have very good subject knowledge, which they use highly effectively in their lesson planning to extend pupils' learning and address any misunderstandings.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the school's recent survey or who talked to inspectors are very happy with the progress their children are making and the quality of teaching in the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The school is a warm, welcoming and inclusive place where individuals, both staff and pupils, are valued. The school lives out its mission statement of '... enabling pupils to become faithful, conscientious, contributing citizens of the future'. This is because personal development is an integral part of the school's work. Through different subjects, trips to places of interest, listening to visitors, assemblies, charity work and making links with the community, pupils learn to be respectful, tolerant and thoughtful.
- Adults are skilled at enabling pupils to express their own opinion and demonstrating that this is valued. As a result, pupils feel listened to and are confident to express their ideas openly. Pupils value the fact that their ideas contribute to the improvement of the school, for example through preventing cars from parking on the playground and getting football nets installed.
- Pupils of all ages are proud of their school. This is partly because there is a range of ways in which pupils take on individual responsibility. For example, Year 6 pupils rise to the challenge of being 'Example Setters' and take pleasure in wearing the red jumpers that show that they have this responsibility. In addition, pupils delighted in telling inspectors about the school's centenary celebrations.
- Pupils are keen and confident to talk about their school and their learning and understand that adults want them to work hard to learn new things. They can clearly explain that behaving well in school is 'important so that we learn as much as we can, so we can be whatever we want to be'. The high expectations that adults have of them have resulted in pupils having high expectations of themselves.
- Pupils' knowledge of how to stay safe online is well advanced. For example, they are aware that people online may not always be who they say they are and they know what to do if something inappropriate appears on their screen.
- Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of the importance of making healthy choices about what they eat and can explain the effects of exercise on the body. This is as a result of effective learning in physical education, science, and personal, social and health education.
- Pupils feel, without doubt, that they are safe and well looked after at school. One pupil summed this up well: 'Whatever happens in school or at home, I could talk to any of the grown-ups here about it'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils respond immediately to adults' instructions. Lessons are very rarely interrupted by the teacher having to remind pupils a second time to do something. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning. They return to their classrooms quickly at the end of playtimes and are ready to learn.
- Pupils behave well because they want to rather than because they have to. When not directly supervised by an adult, even the youngest pupils remember to walk sensibly and show good manners. During the inspection, pupils spontaneously greeted the inspectors and initiated pleasant conversations. Behaviour in and around the school during the inspection was impeccable. School records and conversations with staff and pupils confirm that this is almost always the case.
- All pupils and parents who spoke to inspectors said that bullying is an extremely rare occurrence at English Martyrs'. Pupils understand what bullying means and they take seriously their responsibility to prevent it. Pupils told inspectors that it would be their job to 'stand up' for anyone who was being bullied and report it to a grown-up.

- Pupils like coming to school and as a result most pupils attend well. Very few pupils are regularly absent from school. Despite the school's relentless work in this area, a small number of parents do not yet see the importance of sending their children to school every day.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Achievement is outstanding because pupils make consistently fantastic progress in speaking, reading, writing and mathematics. Test results for Year 6 pupils who recently left the school show that they made faster progress than their peers nationally in reading, writing and particularly in mathematics. This is the also the case for pupils currently in the school in all year groups. Progress in other subjects such as religious education, history and science is similarly impressive.
- Children in Reception get off to a flying start. Many children arrive at the school with less developed skills than would typically be expected for their age, particularly with regard to communication. The extent of this varies from year to year. As a result of really effective teaching, children make rapid progress from where they start. Outcomes vary at the end of Reception each year depending on the starting points of the children. For the last two years, children have made very rapid progress and have been well prepared to start Year 1.
- The most-able pupils thrive on the challenges they receive, particularly in mathematics and writing. As a result of the high expectations of the adults and the tasks that are set to extend their thinking, these pupils make excellent progress. This is evident, for example, in the above-average number of pupils who achieve the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1. In addition, an above-average proportion of pupils reached the highest Level 6 in mathematics at the end of Year 6 last year.
- Disadvantaged pupils and almost all disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the same progress as their classmates, and in some cases better progress. This is because they quickly receive the right kind of support. Those pupils who are not making the same rapid progress are quickly identified and additional support is provided.
- Reading skills are developed quickly and pupils gain fluency and confidence. In the most recent phonics check, the number of pupils achieving the required standard was in line with the national average. This represents rapid progress from their starting points, as many of these pupils arrive at school with little or no English. Pupils have access to a wide range of good-quality books to support their learning in different subjects as well as a well-stocked library. As a result, they develop an enjoyment of reading and can explain their personal reading preferences.
- A number of pupils join the school part-way through the year, many of whom have no English or any previous school experience. These pupils settle exceptionally quickly and make fast progress because leaders react quickly to their needs and provide extra help for them and their families.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Provision in early years is outstanding because the leader and her team are exceptionally skilled. They relentlessly focus on the children's language development to enable them to access all the areas of learning effectively. Teaching is always good and often outstanding. As a result, all children, including those who are disadvantaged, disabled children, and those who have special educational needs or who speak little English, make rapid progress.
- The early years leader knows the strengths and the areas that need further improvement. There is clear evidence that her actions have made a significant difference since the last inspection. For example, the gap between the progress of boys and girls has been reduced and all activities in the classroom now have a clear purpose which sustains children's attention.
- Adults have created remarkably well-organised, vibrant and fun spaces in which children can learn and play. Toys and equipment are plentiful, of high quality and capture the interest and imagination of the children. An inspector observed children so engrossed in their activities that they did not notice he was there.
- The most-able children are challenged to work and think hard. They flourish and blossom in this environment. For example, children explained proudly to an inspector that they had been successful in finding the missing third number that made their calculation add up to 20.

- Children settle quickly into the routines of the classroom and the expectations of the adults. They behave exceedingly well and copy the good manners and polite behaviour modelled by the adults. They are confident to talk to their friends, teachers and visitors. They are proud of the things they create and are keen to share their successes. For example, children were very eager to show an inspector the bird food that they had made.
- Adults take great care to keep children safe. They have been well trained and are vigilant to the signs that children may be vulnerable to harm. It is evident that children feel safe and trust adults in the highly positive and warm relationships that exist and in the confidence that children show in and around the school. Parents agree that their children are safe. They feel involved in their children's learning and are overwhelmingly positive about the work of the school.
- As a result of their time in Reception, children have gained the confidence, skills and abilities to face the challenges of Year 1.

School details

Unique reference number	103425
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10002517

This inspection 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	405
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patrick Gilsenan
Headteacher	Evelyn Harper
Telephone number	0121 4641350
Website	www.englishmartyrscatholicprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	enquiry@englishmartyrs.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 December 2013

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- More than a third of pupils are eligible for pupil premium funding (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are cared for by the local authority). This is higher than the national average.
- Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic groups. Four out of five pupils speak English as an additional language.
- A number of pupils arrive at school part-way through the year. It is often the case that these pupils speak little or no English or have no previous experience of school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or who have special educational needs is in line with the national average.
- Early years provision takes the form of two full-time Reception classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- During the two-day inspection, inspectors observed lessons and conducted learning walks around the school. Several of these were completed jointly with the senior leaders.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' current workbooks and a sample of those from the last academic year.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils during lessons and at playtimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors also heard a number of pupils read. Pupils gave inspectors a tour of the school.
- Inspectors met with three representatives of the governing body, including the Chair of the Governing Body and its vice-chair. Meetings were also held with senior leaders and teachers with responsibilities for subject areas.
- Inspectors analysed a range of documents provided by the school, including information relating to pupils' attainment and progress, attendance, safeguarding and the checks leaders make on the quality of teaching.
- There were too few responses to the online survey, Parent View, to be analysed. The views of parents were gathered by speaking to parents at the beginning and end of the school day and from a recent parental survey conducted by the school.

Inspection team

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