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Mrs Clare Redmond  
Executive Headteacher  
English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School  
Frindsbury Road  
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Dear Mrs Redmond

### **Short inspection of English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 20 February 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in November 2013.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You and your senior teachers have worked with energy and reflection to improve pupils' progress and attainment, ensuring that this has continued to rise. In 2017, the proportion of children that achieved the expected 'good level of development' at the end of Reception was close to the national average. Consequently, children are well prepared to enter Year 1, where they make sustained and sometimes rapid progress. In 2017, at the end of key stages 1 and 2 the attainment of pupils at English Martyrs' was above average in reading, writing and mathematics. You are determined that all pupils receive the best possible education and their welfare is at the heart of all your work.

You have a clear focus on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, and this is reflected in their improved rates of progress. You ensure that the school supports these pupils by promoting their learning and improving their self-confidence. You work effectively with families to promote greater involvement in their children's learning and ensure that pupils attend school regularly.

Your vision, that pupils become self-confident, proud, trustworthy, kind, reliable and considerate, as well as confident to stand up for what is right, underpins everything you do. You provide pupils with a diverse and balanced curriculum which broadens their minds and helps them to think beyond what is in front of them. You have specifically developed the curriculum in the early years to meet the changing needs of the children who enter the school. The emphasis on enriching language and

communication and developing pupils' resilience is making a significant contribution to pupils' good progress.

I found pupils to be kind and caring towards adults, visitors and each other. Pupils work hard and with very positive attitudes. They told me that they enjoy coming to school, they find lessons interesting and that they particularly enjoy the extra-curricular activities. Behaviour is very good, both in class and on the playground. Pupils understand the school's expectations and they know that by respecting each other and collaborating well, the school will be a happy and supportive community.

You have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement identified during the school's previous inspection. At the end of key stage 2, pupils now attain equally well in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils in key stage 2 who attain the higher standards is below the national average. Although not yet outstanding, the quality of teaching has continued to improve. However, you acknowledge that there is still more work to do to continue to strengthen the quality of teaching and ensure that the most able pupils are suitably challenged.

Parents and carers are extremely positive about the school's work. They value the spiritual, caring and nurturing ethos as well as the community spirit. Parents also praise the approachability of senior staff and recognise and support your commitment to both British and Catholic values.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Staff have ensured, through teaching, assemblies and other activities, that pupils are safe and know how to stay safe. Every pupil I spoke with and every parent who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that pupils are safe. Pupils could tell me who they would go to if they were worried, and they were confident that adults would resolve their problems. Pupils are aware of the risks they face. They can explain clearly their understanding of road safety, the need to take care near fire, and 'stranger danger'. Pupils have a depth to their understanding of e-safety and Year 5 digital leaders help other pupils to understand this area of risk.

Staff are suitably trained and alert to the indicators of harm pupils may face. Leaders who have specific responsibility for safeguarding are alert to changes in pupils' behaviour, recognise the signs that indicate a pupil may be at risk of harm, and take appropriate and timely action. They involve external agencies, where necessary, so that pupils and families receive the support they need.

The governor responsible for safeguarding checks that the school's single central record is maintained accurately. Governors also check that safeguarding policies and procedures work effectively.

## Inspection findings

- During this inspection, I focused on the priorities for improvement from the last inspection. I looked, in particular, at the pace of learning, pupils' achievement in writing and reading, opportunities for developing literacy skills across the curriculum, and pupils' handwriting. I also considered the progress of the most able pupils between key stages 1 and 2 and the quality of phonics teaching in key stage 1. Lastly, I looked at the quality of provision in the early years, especially for the teaching of writing and reading.
- Since the previous inspection, pupils' attainment in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 has improved and now matches pupils' high attainment in mathematics. The pace of learning has also improved in most classes and pupils also say that they have to work hard. From our visits to classrooms and reviews of pupils' books, it is clear that this is the case. However, school leaders recognise that the quality of teaching is not as consistently strong as it could be. They are taking steps to ensure that there is even greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the school.
- The school is working hard to ensure that literacy skills are taught throughout the curriculum. There is substantial evidence of the impact of this good work in pupils' history, geography and religious education books.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils that attained the high standards in reading and writing at the end of key stage 2 was lower than the national average. You and your teaching staff are aware of this and have prioritised this for improvement. You have organised specific training for teachers and you are reviewing the appropriateness of the curriculum. In Year 6, the most able pupils are being challenged effectively and this is reflected in the good progress current pupils are making. School leaders recognise the benefits of sharing this good practice across the school.
- Outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check are just below the national averages. However, many pupils have low starting points. Over time, pupils make good progress and, by the end of Year 2, they catch up considerably. During the inspection, we could see how lively teaching was successfully improving pupils' good phonics knowledge. In key stage 1, pupils use their skills well when they are reading. Assessments are accurate and used effectively by teachers to extend pupils' understanding.
- Provision in the early years has recently improved. There are now more opportunities for children to read and write in adult-led sessions, as well as independently, on a daily basis. This has had a positive impact on the progress children are making and there are early indications that outcomes at the end of Reception are rising.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to improve further the quality of teaching, particularly in key stage 2, making sure that there is even greater consistency across the school
- teachers provide greater challenge and have higher expectations of the most able pupils in reading and writing, so that more of these pupils attain the higher standards at the end of key stage 2.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Southwark, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Medway. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sir Robin Boshier  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you and your head of school. We discussed the school's self-evaluation, including information about pupils' progress and improvements made since the last inspection. Together, we visited classrooms in the early years and in key stages 1 and 2. We observed teaching and learning in classrooms and looked at a range of pupils' work in their books. I carried out a further book scrutiny. I met with pupils to talk about their experience of school life and how safe they feel. I observed behaviour on the playground and in the lunch hall. I held meetings with governors, including the lead for safeguarding. I spoke with the local authority school improvement partner. I looked at a range of written evidence, including the school's self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, the single central record and other documents relating to safeguarding. I took account of the views of the 24 parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, their written comments and the views of parents who spoke to me before the start of the school day. I also took account of the views of the 17 members of staff who completed Ofsted's staff survey, and the views of pupils I met during the day.