

Inspection of a good school: English Martyrs Roman Catholic Primary School

St Mark Street, Wapping, London E1 8DJ

Inspection dates:

23 and 24 February 2022

Outcome

English Martyrs Roman Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

English Martyrs is a happy and diverse community where everybody aims to embody the school's values of love, respect and honesty. Staff, governors and pupils described the school as being like a 'big happy family'. Pupils thrive in the nurturing environment.

Teachers have high expectations for all pupils' learning and behaviour. Pupils rise to these expectations. They achieve well and want to be successful. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning, and they behave well in class and around the school. They work and play well together, and encourage and support each other.

Pupils are confident that staff will listen to them and do their best to help if they have any concerns. Pupils said that incidents of bullying or poor behaviour are rare. Staff deal swiftly with any problems that arise.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of experiences that enhance their broader development and raise their awareness of the world around them. They actively contribute to the life of the school as members of the school council, 'eco-warriors' and prayer monitors.

Leaders support pupils in developing their interests and talents. For example, pupils take part in many enrichment activities, including visits and residential trips. They also enjoy music, sports and games clubs.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Pupils benefit from an ambitious, broad and rich curriculum. Leaders have carefully planned the key facts and skills they want pupils to know and remember. Curriculum plans make it clear what important knowledge and skills pupils should learn and when they should learn it. Pupils can recall much of their past learning in detail. For example, in mathematics, they can use their knowledge of multiplication and division to work out percentages. Leaders have adjusted the things that teachers teach to help pupils catch up because of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Subject leaders have strong curriculum expertise. They provide a wealth of helpful guidance for teachers. This develops their subject knowledge and helps them deliver subject curriculums effectively. However, on occasion, some teachers are unclear about the most effective approaches to use to help pupils embed new learning.

Leaders make learning to read a priority. When they start school, children begin to learn phonics straight away. Teachers ensure that children can remember and use the sounds that they learn. They provide pupils who speak English as an additional language with close attention and support. Staff give children extra help if they need it. As a result, children catch up quickly. Staff encourage pupils, including those in the early years, to love books and share books daily. Pupils gain the knowledge and skills to read independently by the end of Year 2.

Subjects are typically well planned and taught. For instance, in mathematics, teachers have good subject knowledge. Pupils said that mathematics makes them think and they have to work hard. Lessons begin with a chance to recap what pupils already know and can do. Pupils enjoy the mathematical challenges that they are given and use resources effectively. From Reception onwards, pupils quickly secure their knowledge of number. They explain what they are doing, using subject-specific vocabulary accurately.

In mathematics and English, teachers make regular and precise checks to see how well pupils are learning. They use this information to address misconceptions quickly and support pupils where needed. In a few other subjects, such as history, checks are not as helpful. This means that some teachers do not always know which important knowledge pupils are remembering.

The early years curriculum provides children with a strong start. They learn happily together in their well-planned environment. Staff in Nursery and Reception Years work closely together. They have a good understanding of the needs of each child. That means that children are well prepared for their learning when they move into the Reception class. Children are polite and kind to each other. They are confident learners.

Teachers identify and meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively. In lessons, learning is broken down into small manageable steps so that pupils experience success. Leaders keep a close eye on how well these pupils are learning the curriculum. Pupils with SEND thrive in this nurturing and supportive environment.

Teachers said that leaders are supportive and mindful of the workload of staff. They said that leaders listen to them and are approachable. They find the assessment systems in school manageable.

The local governing body understands the school well. It receives the information that it needs to enable it to check successfully that school leaders are providing effective education for pupils. Governors provide a good balance of support and challenge to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors ensure that all staff have regular and detailed safeguarding training. This means that staff are alert to the possible signs of abuse and neglect. They are quick to act on any concerns. Leaders ensure that pupils are given the right support in a timely manner and they keep meticulous records. Links with other agencies are strong. Staff recognise the importance of promoting pupils' health, well-being and emotional development.

Pupils said that they feel safe at school. They have many opportunities to learn how to keep themselves safe, including road safety, fire safety and how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few cases, teachers' subject knowledge is not consistently strong across all subjects. For example, while teachers have worked hard to implement the history curriculum, some staff need more guidance on how to deliver elements of subject planning and check that pupils build on what they already know. Leaders should continue to support staff to strengthen their subject expertise.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in May 2013.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	100962
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10211301
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	206
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Peter Edwards
Headteacher	Miss Bronagh Nugent
Website	www.englishmartyrs.towerhamlets.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- English Martyrs Roman Catholic Primary School is a voluntary-aided school in the Diocese of Westminster. Its last section 48 inspection took place in February 2016.
- The school is a smaller than average-sized primary school with a 26-place Nursery class.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other leaders and staff at the school. He met with three members of the governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, history and mathematics. In these subjects, he spoke to leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers

and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. He looked at other subjects as part of this inspection, including art and geography.

- The inspector met with groups of pupils to talk about their work, behaviour and their experiences of school.
- The inspector considered a number of policy documents. He considered 38 responses to Ofsted's Parent View. In addition, 22 responses to Ofsted's questionnaire for staff were considered. He also considered 70 responses to the pupil survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector viewed the school's website and policies, met with the designated safeguarding leader (headteacher), spoke with pupils, staff and governors, and checked relevant documentation and safeguarding records.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Chris Birtles, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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