

Inspection of a good school: English

Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, Preston

Sizer Street, Preston, Lancashire PR1 7DR

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, Preston continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years, play kindly together. They are proud of their school and are happy to belong to a supportive community. Staff and pupils share relationships that are based on mutual respect. Pupils particularly enjoy eating their lunch with their teachers and talking about their day so far.

Staff deal with any incidents of bullying swiftly and effectively. Pupils know that there are trusted adults they can turn to if they have any concerns. This helps them to feel safe in school. Many pupils make use of 'the snug' to help calm them if they are feeling worried or anxious.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils and how they should behave. Pupils quickly become used to clear routines. They behave well and act sensibly around the school. Older pupils delight in acting as 'reading buddies' to younger pupils.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn a broad and balanced curriculum. They rise to leaders' ambitious expectations and achieve well across a range of subjects.

Leaders plan exciting opportunities to widen pupils' experiences. Pupils take part in regular school trips, for example to the park, farm or museum. Many pupils recently enjoyed taking part in a regional singing competition. Leaders encourage pupils to have high aspirations for the future. For example, pupils know that achieving well can open the door to more options, such as studying for a degree at university.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum. Mostly, leaders have thought carefully about the order in which key knowledge should be taught in each subject. This means that, for the most part, pupils' learning builds logically on what has gone before.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. This helps them to provide clear explanations for pupils. Teachers regularly check to make sure pupils have understood earlier learning. They are quick to spot and address any misconceptions. On the whole, teachers are supported well by subject leaders to design learning for pupils. Mostly, staff choose appropriate activities that help pupils to secure key concepts before introducing new learning. However, in a small number of subjects, from time to time, some teachers do not select activities that support pupils to learn the intended curriculum.

Leaders have ensured that reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes enjoy listening to stories and rhymes. In the Reception class, children learn phonics successfully from the start. Staff in the early years are equipped well to support children's speech and language development.

Leaders have ensured that staff have benefited from relevant phonics training. This has equipped most staff to deliver the recently introduced phonics programme with confidence. That said, a very small number of staff are still getting to grips with teaching the phonics programme. Leaders have appropriate plans in place to provide additional support and training for these staff.

Largely, staff ensure that books are matched well to the sounds that pupils and children have learned. Those pupils who struggle with reading receive appropriate support from staff to help them to catch up quickly. As a result, almost all pupils can read fluently and confidently by the end of Year 2. Pupils in key stage 2 enjoy reading a rich variety of texts. Leaders promote initiatives and challenges that encourage more pupils to read often for pleasure.

In most lessons, pupils are keen to learn and focus on their work. Those pupils who are at risk of disrupting the learning of their peers are supported successfully by staff to manage their feelings and behaviour. Most pupils attend school regularly. However, some pupils do not attend school as often as they should. This hinders their progress through the curriculum.

Leaders have taken pupils' prior experiences into account when designing wider development opportunities. They endeavour to raise pupils' aspirations. Pupils understand what it means to live in modern Britain. For example, they experience democracy in action through the head girl and head boy elections. Pupils learn about responsibility by taking on roles such as eco reps, school councillors and prefects. They are accepting of others and value and embrace the differences between people.

Leaders have effective systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. They ensure that these pupils receive appropriate support. Pupils with SEND are fully involved in all areas of school life. They learn well across the curriculum.

Leaders have a clear view of the strengths of the school and those aspects that they are developing further. However, some governors have not ensured that they are informed well enough about some aspects of the school. This prevents them from holding leaders to account fully for the quality of education that pupils receive.

Staff told inspectors that they are happy working at the school. They feel that leaders support them well with their workload and well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff are well trained in safeguarding and receive regular updates. Staff understand that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. They are vigilant to the signs that may indicate a pupil is at risk of harm. Leaders have ensured that there are clear processes in place to report any concerns.

Leaders follow any safeguarding concerns up swiftly and they are tenacious in securing help with outside agencies for those pupils and families who may need it. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They understand the potential dangers of being online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Those responsible for governance have not ensured that they are informed well enough about some aspects of the leadership of the school. This prevents them from holding leaders to account fully for the quality of education that pupils receive. Governors should ensure that they have the information and expertise needed to hold leaders to account effectively.
- Some pupils do not attend school regularly enough. This prevents these pupils from accessing the full curriculum and learning as well as they should. Leaders, including governors, should ensure that these pupils and their families receive the support they need to ensure that pupils attend school regularly.
- In a small number of subjects, on occasion, some teachers do not select appropriate activities that support pupils to learn the intended curriculum. This hinders some pupils' learning and prevents them from building securely on what they know already. Leaders should ensure that teachers are supported well in these subjects to design learning for pupils.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2017.

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.

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	119605
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10256208
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	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Simon Gillespie
Headteacher	Annalisa Howarth
Website	www.englishmartyrs.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 and 13 December 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been significant staffing changes since the last inspection.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Lancaster. The school's last section 48 inspection took place in March 2019.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders.
- The inspector met with leaders, staff and pupils to evaluate the culture of safeguarding. The inspector also checked the school's safeguarding procedures and records.
- The inspector met with representatives of the governing body. The inspector held telephone conversations with representatives of the local authority and the diocese.

- The inspector conducted deep dives in early reading, art and design, and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with the subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with pupils about their work and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector reviewed responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. The inspector also spoke with some parents to hear their views of the school.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at lunchtime and spoke to pupils about their views of behaviour.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, behaviour and attendance records, and the school's self-evaluation.

Inspection team

Jenny Jones, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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