

Inspection of English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

Evelyn Road, Sparkhill, English Martyrs RC Junior & Infant School, Birmingham,
West Midlands B11 3JW

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

English Martyrs' Catholic Primary is an inclusive and welcoming school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and speak of it with pride. They value the many opportunities that they have to work together. Pupils contribute keenly to their school and the wider community. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils respond to these expectations by working hard, behaving well and looking after each other. However, despite leaders' work to improve pupils' attendance, some pupils do not attend school regularly enough.

Pupils are happy and safe in school. They have good relationships with staff and each other. Pupils do not worry about bullying. They know that if they have any problems, staff will sort things out for them. Pupils understand about their rights and their responsibilities to each other and to the environment. They know that everyone is equal. Staff encourage pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and to develop their social skills.

Pupils attend a wide range of clubs, including Spanish, gardening, music and multi-skills. Pupils share a love of reading with staff and each other and enjoy the wide variety of books available to them.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. They have considered how the curriculum can be improved for everyone. Pupils who speak English as an additional language gain English quickly when they join the school. Pupils with SEND are well supported by skilled staff. Any additional needs of pupils are quickly identified and staff work well with parents and external agencies. Pupils are encouraged to work hard and do their best. However, teachers do not always recognise when some pupils are ready to move on to the next steps in their learning and do not adapt pupils' learning accordingly.

Leaders have designed activities that help pupils to remember more. This means that pupils build their learning as they progress through the school. For example, in art and design, pupils have learned about a wide range of artists, so they are able to discuss, evaluate and compare how artists work. The school's assessment systems help teachers to know how well pupils are doing and to plan work that will help them to deepen their learning. These systems are well established in mathematics and English, but they are less well developed in the foundation subjects.

Leaders have a love of reading, which all staff share. Pupils also enjoy reading and can name their favourite authors or books. Learning to read starts as soon as children join the Reception class. Leaders and staff are passionate about children having the best possible start to their education. Skilled staff teach phonics well.

With a plan to 'keep up rather than catch up', anyone who needs it receives extra support in class during the day. This works very well, so even those who find reading difficult say that they enjoy it. Older pupils become fluent and enthusiastic readers.

Pupils know how to behave at English Martyrs'. Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and pupils live up to these. Routines are known and understood by pupils.

Pupils' personal development is a strength of this school. Leaders have created lots of opportunities for pupils to become more independent. Together, staff and leaders encourage pupils to be the best that they can be. Pupils have opportunities to reflect on their beliefs, to form opinions and to develop their social skills. They understand that they have rights and that they also have a responsibility to others. Helping others or younger pupils is a core value promoted through the school. This work starts in the Reception class, where children work together and treat each other with care and respect.

Relationships across the school are positive. Pupils are considerate of each other. Staff know pupils well and they share warm and respectful relationships. Leaders welcome parents and families at the gate each morning. Parents appreciate this because they know they can always speak to someone if they need to. Leaders take every opportunity to remind families about the importance of regular school attendance, but this is not fully understood by all. Attendance for some pupils is far too low.

Staff feel well supported by leaders and governors. They know that leaders care about their well-being. Governors understand their role and work well with the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff receive safeguarding training and updates. This means that they understand their responsibilities to keep children safe. They are also alert to any signs that pupils could be at risk from harm. Leaders and staff are aware of risks in the local area.

Staff use an online system to record any concerns. These records are detailed and leaders follow up concerns quickly. Leaders seek support from other agencies, when needed.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe both in the real world and online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The attendance of some pupils remains stubbornly low. This is despite leaders' rigorous attempts to improve it. This means that these pupils are not able to benefit from the wide range of opportunities that the school offers. Leaders should continue to work with parents and families so that they understand the importance of pupils attending regularly.
- Leaders' use of assessment in the foundation subjects is under development. As a result, it is unclear how leaders and teachers use checks on what pupils have learned to identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders should continue to refine their use of assessment in the foundation subjects so that it accurately identifies gaps in pupils' knowledge, to help teachers to adapt pupils' subsequent learning.
- Some staff do not adapt their practice so that pupils develop their knowledge and skills as well as they could. This means that some teachers do not identify pupils who are ready to have their knowledge deepened. Leaders should develop teachers' pedagogical knowledge so that they are better able to adapt pupils' learning, engage all learners and challenge those who are ready to move on.

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	103425
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10240554
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Maria Winters
Headteacher	Evelyn Harper
Website	www.englishmartyrscatholicprimaryschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The chair of the governing body has been appointed since the last inspection.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school has a breakfast club operating onsite. This provision is operated by the school.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and members of staff.

- The lead inspector met with three members of the governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector also held a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner from the Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham.
- Inspectors held meetings with a range of leaders to discuss safeguarding, provision for pupils with SEND, pupils' behaviour, attendance, personal development and additional funding.
- As part of the inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, science, art and design, and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils formally and informally about their learning and experiences at school. Two separate groups of pupils accompanied inspectors on personal development learning walks around the school.
- Safeguarding documents were checked, including the checks that leaders make on staff's suitability to work with children. The inspectors checked that staff implement safeguarding policies and procedures effectively across the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the free-text responses received during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents. These included the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, behaviour records, attendance records and minutes of meetings held by the governing body.

Inspection team

Anne Potter, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Anna Smith	Ofsted Inspector
Lindsay Nash	Ofsted Inspector

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