



English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110004
LEA Reading LEA
Inspection number 278340
Inspection dates 21 September 2005 to 22 September 2005
Reporting inspector Caroline Bolton HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Dee Road |
| School category | Voluntary aided | | Tilehurst |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 | | Reading RG30 4BE |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01189015466 |
| Number on roll | 316 | Fax number | 01189015467 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mrs A Taplin |
| Date of previous inspection | 5 April 2000 | Headteacher | Miss L Heneghan |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three of Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools.

Description of the school

English Martyrs Catholic Primary School is a large primary school. Most of the pupils are from white British or Irish backgrounds but there is a significant minority of pupils who come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. The proportions of pupils who are entitled to free school meals and of pupils who have special educational needs are below the national averages but the percentage for whom English is an additional language is a little higher. The school has experienced difficulties in recent years in recruiting and retaining sufficient numbers of suitably qualified staff, partly because of the high cost of housing in the area.

Key for inspection grades

| | |
|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

English Martyrs Catholic Primary School has a number of strengths, particularly in the care and guidance provided for the learners and in the quality of the relationships between the adults and pupils. Its effectiveness overall, however, is inadequate because the leadership and management are insufficiently rigorous in their evaluation of the school's performance and because the quality of the teaching and the pupils' progress, while good in several classes, are inconsistent. The school's results for the national tests in 2004 showed that the pupils' progress over Key Stage 2 was below the average. The school did not meet its targets for the 2005 national tests. In judging its overall effectiveness to be good, the leadership and management of the school take too little account of the weaknesses. The governing body is supportive of the school but is also too generous in evaluating its performance. Since the last inspection in 2000 there has been a decline in the school's overall effectiveness. The quality of teaching and learning is not as good as it was at the last inspection, when none was unsatisfactory. The provision for information and communication technology, however, has improved. The leadership and management have not demonstrated the capacity to bring about sufficient improvement since the last inspection. The school provides inadequate value for money. In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- * improve standards and ensure that all groups of pupils make the expected progress in each key stage*
- * improve the consistency of the teaching and learning, with a particular emphasis upon meeting the full range of the pupils' attainment and needs*
- * ensure that the leadership and management adopt more rigorous approaches to the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

The standards reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2004 were above the national average in reading and writing and in line with the average in mathematics. The results for 2005 show an improvement on 2004 in the proportions of pupils reaching the expected level for their age in reading and mathematics but a decline in writing. Between 2000 and 2004, the trend in the school's attainment at Key Stage 1 was below the national trend. The pupils who have just entered the Foundation Stage have speaking and listening skills similar to those expected for their age. In 2004, the test results at Key Stage 2 were below the national average in English and mathematics and well below in science. The five-year trend in the results from 2000 to 2004 was below the national trend. The year group of pupils who took the tests in 2004 had

made progress over Key Stage 2 which was below the national average overall. At Key Stage 2, the 2005 results indicate that a lower proportion of pupils achieved the age-expected Level 4 or above in English and mathematics. The school's assessment data show that while some pupils made satisfactory progress during Key Stage 2 others did not. The school did not reach its targets for the 2005 tests. The pupils' progress in lessons is inconsistent, ranging from inadequate to good, and is inadequate overall. While the pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress, the progress made by the more able is uneven.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' overall personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The relationships between the pupils and adults are good. The pupils demonstrate confidence in showing and explaining their work to others. Teachers encourage pupils to respect other people and their opinions and this contributes to the positive climate in the school community. The staff use a variety of methods to recognise and reward good behaviour, effort and achievement. The pupils' ideas about how to achieve the school's current priorities for development are included in the school improvement plan. Most pupils say they enjoy their time at school and feel it is a safe and secure environment. The school has comprehensive policies on behaviour and bullying and most pupils report that they know where to seek support from an adult if they have problems. However, while many parents were content, a few expressed concerns about the effectiveness of the school's approach to dealing with incidents of bullying and bad behaviour. The pupils' behaviour in classrooms and around the site is generally good, although there are occasional exceptions. Pupils have a clear understanding of school rules on how to behave and how to treat others. They develop social skills by collaborating harmoniously with each other. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school and wider community. Many are involved in charity and fundraising projects, some of which have been initiated by the school council. They also perform in concerts and drama productions in the local community. The school has achieved the silver award for healthy schools. It promotes healthy lifestyles through themed weeks, healthy snacks in the tuck shop and work on health and hygiene with the local health authority. Water is provided throughout the school and there is a good range of sporting activities on offer during and after school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

The school has systems for monitoring the quality of the teaching and learning and provides a satisfactory range of opportunities for professional development for the staff. The school's self-evaluation, however, takes too generous a view of the teaching and learning because it does not take enough account of the weaknesses. There is a

significant amount of good practice in classes across the school, including those for Year 6 pupils. At best, the teaching is well-planned, engages the pupils by making use of a good range of resources and activities and provides a suitable level of challenge for pupils of all levels of attainment. In effective lessons the teachers manage discussion well and make skilful use of questioning to involve the less confident pupils, as well as those who are keen to contribute. Where the teaching is unsuccessful, the resources and activities are not matched to the pupils' needs and attainment so that the more able pupils in particular make too little progress. Time is not well used; activities are continued for too long so that pupils lose interest, while the closing part of the lesson is not always well planned to ensure that everyone has fully understood the key learning points. Occasionally, the pupils become restless and talk over the teachers' voices without effective action being taken to restore their concentration. While teaching and learning are good at best, the quality is too uneven and inadequate overall. The school has a clear assessment policy which is reviewed regularly. Targets are set for individual pupils and for groups and, while many pupils are aware of their targets, they are often less clear about how they can reach them. There are procedures for the transfer of assessment information between teachers as pupils move from one year group to the next. There is, however, inconsistency in the use made by staff of assessment information in planning work matched to the pupils' needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced. Progress has been made in implementing the national strategy for primary education but the school recognises that more work remains to be done to ensure that the staff are confident in developing a broader range of teaching methods. The school offers a variety of sporting activities for pupils outside lesson time and a reasonable choice of extracurricular opportunities overall. The provision for the pupils in the Foundation Stage provides for a range of appropriate learning activities but the use of assessment information in planning the curriculum for these pupils is at an early stage of development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils is good. Most parents feel that the school cares for and supports their children well. The school uses a suitable range of strategies to support pupils with special educational needs; these include literacy and behaviour support. There is also provision for language development work with children for whom English is an additional language. However, there is not yet any specific programme to meet the needs of gifted and high attaining pupils. The school recognises this as an area for development. There are appropriate arrangements in place for the assessment of the impact of additional support, including feedback from class teachers and termly reviews with parents. The school has a clear child protection policy but it does not reflect recent changes in staff responsibilities. There has been a high turnover of staff in recent time and only a few of those currently in post have

had sufficient training in child protection while they have been in the school. There are plans to address this issue but not until the spring term. Health and safety procedures are clear and risk assessments have been completed for all areas of the school. Parents and pupils report inconsistencies in the setting of homework. Some parents express the concern that homework is not always set regularly and does not extend their children's schoolwork. The school is strengthening its arrangements to ensure smooth transition between years. These arrangements include parents' information evenings and new arrangements for teaching in the first part of the first term in which pupils begin a new key stage. However, the teachers' use of information on pupils who are new to them is inconsistent. There are good transitional arrangements for Year 6 pupils progressing to the local Catholic secondary school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The school's managers are committed to ensuring the welfare of the pupils and to fulfilling the school's aims as set out in its mission statement. The pupils behave well and most enjoy coming to school. Overall, the support and guidance provided for pupils are good and the current school improvement plan focuses upon achieving the outcomes set out in the government's recent white paper, Every Child Matters. The staff work in collaboration with those of other schools locally to address issues of common concern and to widen the opportunities available to the pupils, for instance in sport. Senior managers have worked hard to overcome difficulties in recent time in recruiting and retaining suitably qualified staff. They have not, however, had enough impact upon the pupils' progress because they do not have sufficient knowledge about the key measures of the school's performance. The 2005 test results supplied before and in the early part of the inspection were, for example, replaced by different figures towards the end of the inspection. The results of the 2005 national tests at Key Stage 2, which were available in unvalidated form in the summer, have not been analysed thoroughly enough in order to provide a clear picture of the progress made by the pupils in the year group. The school has arrangements to seek the views of the parents; the great majority of those responding to the questionnaire supplied in advance of this inspection agreed that their views were sought and acted upon but a significant minority felt that this was not the case. There are systems in place for monitoring the work of the school but the school's own written self-evaluation is unduly generous in judging its overall effectiveness to be good. This judgement takes too little account of inconsistencies in the teaching and the pupils' progress. The governors are committed to and supportive of the school but their evaluation of its effectiveness is also over-optimistic. Leadership and management are inadequate. The managers do not have detailed enough knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision and the pupils' achievement to demonstrate satisfactory capacity to improve.

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Inspection judgements

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| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall | 16-19 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | | |
|--|----|----|
| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 4 | NA |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 3 | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage | 3 | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 4 | NA |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | No | NA |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | No | NA |

Achievement and standards

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| How well do learners achieve? | 4 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 4 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 4 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 3 | NA |

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 | NA |
| The attendance of learners | 3 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 3 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 3 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 | NA |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 | NA |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 4 | NA |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 3 | NA |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 | NA |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

| | | |
|--|----|----|
| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 4 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 4 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 4 | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 4 | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 4 | NA |
| The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected | No | NA |

| | |
|---|-----|
| The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy | |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise | Yes |
| Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse | Yes |
| Learners are educated about sexual health | Yes |
| The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe | |
| Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements | Yes |
| Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place | Yes |
| Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism | Yes |
| Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them | Yes |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution | |
| Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships | Yes |
| Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them | Yes |
| Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community | Yes |
| The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being | |
| There is provision to promote learners' basic skills | Yes |
| Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams | Yes |
| Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form | NA |
| Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy | NA |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

After our visit to inspect your school, we would like to tell you our findings and to thank you for welcoming us and talking to us during our visit. You will perhaps have heard that we have decided that your school needs special measures. This means that, although the school does some things well, there are some areas which are weak and which the school needs help to improve.

One of the main reasons that the school needs special measures is because many of the children could learn more than they do. There are several reasons for us to believe this. Some lessons could be planned better to make sure that all the children have work to do which is right for them. We also think that time in some lesson is not used as well as it could be. Although children usually behave well, occasionally there are some who do not listen carefully enough to the teacher and sometimes they make it difficult for others to hear properly. There are many things about your school which are good. We saw several interesting lessons, in which everyone was working well and enjoying their work because the teaching was so good. The adults in the school work hard to care for you and you usually get on very well with them. They encourage you to respect each other and to take part in activities which help other people. They also try to make sure that you eat healthy food and keep yourselves healthy in other ways. Most of the children we spoke to said they enjoy their time in school.

You will not be surprised that we have asked the school to improve the things which need to be better as quickly as possible. Your teachers will have help to make the improvements and Her Majesty's Inspectors will be visiting the school regularly to check on how well the school is making progress. Thank you again for welcoming us to your school.