

English Martyrs' Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108842
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	288204
Inspection dates	20–21 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Gianna Ulyatt

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	259
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	
Headteacher	Mr Michael Gallagher (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2002
School address	Redcar Road Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR5 5AU
Telephone number	0191 5535540
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

English Martyrs School is above average in size. It serves a predominantly disadvantaged community where unemployment is high and educational attainment is low. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few are from minority ethnic families and a few are learning English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is just above the national average. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The school has part-time Nursery provision for 52 children and attainment on entry to the school is just below that which is typical of three year olds. A significant number of pupils joined the school three years ago, due to the closure of a nearby school. Since September 2006, the school has been through an unsettled period with many changes to key staff. The school does not have a permanent headteacher, but has an acting headteacher seconded from another school until the end of the academic year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

English Martyrs is a satisfactory school with strengths in aspects of care and personal development. The inspection confirms the school's evaluation of itself is accurate in most respects. The acting headteacher offers strong support and guidance and, with the active commitment of senior staff and governors, actions to raise attainment are having a positive effect on progress in lessons. The majority of parents are pleased with the school, as one wrote, '... both my children thoroughly enjoy going to school.'

Although there are some differences in pupils' levels of attainment when they start school, in general they are below average. Pupils make satisfactory progress in all key stages. By the time pupils are 11 years of age, their achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. The school's test results in 2006 showed that standards were better in English than they were in mathematics and science, where more able pupils in particular did not do as well as they should have done. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given satisfactory support to enable them to succeed as well as other pupils.

Pupils' personal development is good. Relationships are good and pupils behave well in and around the school. They have made pupils from the closing school feel very welcome. Pupils express themselves politely and honestly, when asked for their opinions by adults. Older pupils develop increasing responsibility and help to care for younger ones during lunchtime periods. The school council fundraises for the local community.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Parents confirm that, 'Teachers are always very approachable and willing to help pupils develop in any way.' Teachers are well prepared for their lessons. They use resources well and explain clearly to help pupils learn. The good relationships between adults and pupils ensure pupils try hard and want to please the teacher. Lessons are not always pitched at the right level to ensure challenge for all, because information from assessment is not used sufficiently in planning. In the Foundation Stage provision is satisfactory. Staff interact sensitively with children during adult-led activities, but planning for independent learning is not focused enough on what children are expected to learn.

The curriculum is satisfactory and, through the good range of visitors from the community, pupils' horizons are broadened. The school has recently won an award to enrich the curriculum through developing creative partnerships. The good emphasis on personal, social health and citizenship education ensures that pupils learn how to stay safe and how to develop a healthy lifestyle. Pupils develop sound skills in information and communication technology (ICT), mathematics and English which prepares them satisfactorily for their next stage in education and their economic well-being.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Although many of its members are new to their roles, the senior leadership team is tackling enthusiastically and effectively the issues accurately identified through self-evaluation. The school works well with outside agencies to ensure pupils have good pastoral and nurturing support. Overall, the school has successfully addressed the areas for improvement at the last inspection and offers satisfactory value for money. The capacity to improve is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards of attainment in mathematics and science.
- Ensure the more able pupils fulfil their potential.

- Ensure that teachers have better information about pupils' attainment as a basis for planning lessons.
- Improve planning for learning through play in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards attained by pupils when they are 11 years old are broadly average. Achievement is satisfactory. When pupils start school in the Nursery their attainment is below that of a typical three year old especially in language for communication and thinking and personal, social and emotional development. They get off to a satisfactory start in the Foundation Stage but, by the end of the Reception year, most children's attainment is below expectations for children of this age. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. The school's results of the assessments of Year 2 pupils in 2006 show an improvement over previous years; standards were broadly average. The school's results in the 2006 national tests for Year 6 pupils were broadly average; the results in English were better than those in mathematics and science. In mathematics in particular, the more able pupils did not reach the higher levels of which they were capable. These results represent satisfactory achievement from the standards these pupils reached at the end of Year 2. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make satisfactory progress. Pupils who are learning English make good progress in language acquisition.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils behave well and clearly understand the difference between right and wrong. A school focus, resulting in producing anti-bullying posters, has heightened pupils' awareness of their responsibilities towards others. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school. They enjoy school, attend regularly and know that they are expected to work hard in lessons. The school has helped to instil sensible habits for keeping healthy. School menus contain healthy choices. Pupils enjoy sports and participate in extra-curricular opportunities in a variety of physical activities. Many pupils are keen participants in the democratic process of electing class representatives for the school council and some are learning about the financial responsibilities that go with borrowing money. They enjoy the regular opportunities to use ICT to improve their learning and to develop their problem-solving skills in mathematics. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are given opportunities to demonstrate their achievements and time and space to think about their feelings and emotions. They have developed good friendships with pupils from the closing school and made them feel very welcome.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and account for the steady progress pupils make as they move up the school. Teachers and their assistants work well together to support pupils. Throughout the school, relationships are good so pupils behave well and try hard for their teachers. Teachers explain what pupils are expected to learn so they are well prepared for their tasks. Lessons are well organised and teachers make good use of ICT in lessons to extend pupils' learning. In good lessons, teachers use resources well and ensure pupils of all abilities are

challenged. Although planning is thorough, teachers do not have enough detailed information about the attainment of individual pupils to maximise their learning potential. They regularly mark pupils' work, but their comments do not always point pupils to the next stage in their learning. In the Foundation Stage, adult interaction with children is satisfactory and extends their learning. Opportunities for independent learning are missed because the activities set out for children to access independently do not have a clear learning focus.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and all pupils experience a broad and balanced education. English and mathematics are given appropriate priority and time is allocated for lessons in ICT. Pupils have regular opportunities to practise new skills in these subjects in other lessons. The school has been awarded the National Activemark and is currently seeking to develop Active Playgrounds with the School Sports Coordinator. Many pupils participate in the various sports offered in the extra-curriculum programme. Personal, social, health and citizenship education features strongly in the curriculum and has a good impact on pupils' personal development. Older pupils enjoy French lessons which are taught by a specialist teacher from a secondary school. The curriculum is enhanced through a good range of visitors who share their experiences with the pupils and through visits to places of local interest. The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory and is planned through a range of activities both indoors and outside. However, planning is often activity-based and is not focused enough on what children are expected to learn.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Safeguarding systems meet national guidelines and risk assessments are in place. The welfare, pastoral and emotional support for pupils is good and pupils confirm that they feel safe and are happy to come to school. Nurture groups provide good support for vulnerable pupils and for those who have difficulty with their learning so that they are enabled to make similar progress to their peers.

The support and guidance provided for pupils' academic progress are satisfactory. As part of the school's drive to raise standards, teachers provide pupils with criteria for judging their success in each lesson. Although the school has introduced suitable procedures to give pupils academic guidance, they are not used consistently to help them understand how well they are doing or how they can reach higher standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The acting headteacher has offered strong support and guidance to help the school take the actions necessary to raise standards. Although some members of the senior leadership team are new to their roles, they know the school well and play an active and determined role in improving its provision. Led by the deputy headteacher, they accurately evaluated its provision in order to inform the priorities in the school improvement plan. Roles and responsibilities have been clarified and there is a strong commitment to improve standards. Consequently, staff morale is good. Governance is satisfactory. Many governors are

also new to their role and through good quality information provided by the acting headteacher, are increasingly successful in holding the school to account for its performance.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

English Martyrs' Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School

Redcar Road

Sunderland

Tyne and Wear

SR5 5AU

20 March 2007

Dear Pupils

As you know Mrs Buller, Mr Chidgey and I visited your school recently. We want to say a big thank you for making us very welcome. We really enjoyed talking with you in small groups, in classes and at lunchtime. You are very polite and well mannered and you helped us understand how your school works. It was good to see how the pupils from Saint Hilda's School have settled well and how they have made good friendships.

We were impressed with the way you behave in lessons and in the playground. You certainly had fun in the snow! It is good to see older pupils looking after the younger ones. This helps them to feel safe and secure in school. You told us how important it is to win the attendance trophy and how much you enjoy art and design technology. We know teachers care about you and want the best for you. We could see you trying your best in lessons concentrating well and listening to your teachers.

We have found out some things that can be better in your school but remember you have to help out too. We have asked the school to keep a very close check on your progress in reading, writing and mathematics. We have asked all your teachers to explain exactly to each one of you what you need to learn next. This will help you take extra special care with your work so you can try even harder to reach your target and get better test results. For Reception and Nursery children we have asked the school to think about ways they can learn while they are playing.

We are sure you understand how important it is to try your very, very best at all times. You also know how essential good friendships are. Don't forget that the good friends you make now may well be your friends for life!

With very best wishes

Gianna Ulyatt

Lead Inspector