

English Martyrs Roman Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100824
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	323355
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Natalia Power

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	429
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Uhure
Headteacher	Mrs Anne Boyd
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Flint Street London SE17 1QD
Telephone number	020 7703 4726
Fax number	020 7277 1743

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This two-form-entry school is larger than average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Most pupils are from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds, with pupils from Black African heritages forming the largest group. Around nine out of ten have first languages other than English, most commonly Yoruba and Spanish. A higher than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Of these, pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties form the largest group.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school in which pupils from all backgrounds thrive because of the high quality of care provided for each individual. Parents strongly support the school. One commented, 'I cannot ask for more.' Another said, 'The school is well organised and has good teachers. It is a good environment for a child.' In turn, the school supports parents well, for instance by working closely with them to ensure that Year 6 pupils go to the secondary schools that most closely match their needs. The school has excellent links not only with parents but also with a wide range of external agencies to promote pupils' learning and well-being.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage from starting points in language and social skills which are well below those expected for their age. Those at an early stage of learning English receive good support and make good progress. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are happy and secure, and continue to develop good personal qualities. However, their reading, writing and mathematical skills are well below average. Sometimes pupils are given too many worksheets to complete in lessons and too few opportunities to write independently and gain fluency. Pupils' progress improves in Years 3 to 6, and pupils leave with standards in English, mathematics and science which fluctuate from year to year but which are generally below average. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds, those for whom English is not their first language, and those with learning difficulties, are well supported and make progress in line with others. From their starting points, pupils make good progress overall.

Pupils enjoy learning, and this is reflected in their good attendance. They develop good personal qualities. The school's core values - faith, respect, responsibility, fairness, compassion and wisdom - are known and understood by each pupil, and this is reflected in the consideration and respect they show to one another. They behave well in lessons and around the school. In this safe and supportive environment, pupils thrive and grow in confidence. Adults care for their individual needs very well. Pupils are given good opportunities to evaluate their learning and set their own targets for the coming term. However, due to inconsistency in marking, they do not always know how to improve the quality of their work from day to day. Though many teachers mark pupils' work carefully, offering guidance on how they can improve, this is not always the case and the school recognises the need to ensure that all work is marked consistently.

The school's leadership is good, and the headteacher and her deputy work in close collaboration to raise standards and ensure the good personal development and care of pupils. The relatively new team of curriculum leaders is growing in confidence, but does not contribute sufficiently to raising standards or participate fully in the school's planning. Standards by the end of Year 6 are higher than they were at the time of the last inspection, teaching is stronger and planning for the future is clear and focused on raising standards. These improvements indicate that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with social and language skills well below those expected for their age. Close partnerships with parents are maintained through regular progress meetings and the use of 'special books' linking home and school. Children's progress is regularly assessed and this information is used successfully to plan for them and to support their individual needs. As a result, children make good progress and in many areas reach expected

levels by the end of the Reception Year. However, attainment remains below the expected level in communication, language and literacy, and tasks to encourage children to write are not always sufficiently stimulating.

Adults promote children's welfare well. They provide firm but kind support and as a result children develop good social and emotional skills. There is a good balance of child-initiated and teacher-led activities. Activities take good account of the children's own interests and nurture their sense of wonder at the world around them. Good leadership and management by the Early Years Foundation Stage leader ensure consistent quality across Nursery and Reception classes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 1 and 2 by raising the quality of teaching, so that it is consistently good or better.
- Develop the curriculum leaders' roles to give them more opportunity to contribute to school improvement.
- Ensure that all marking is of the quality of the best.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds make good overall progress from starting points which are well below the average for their age. By the time they leave, they reach standards somewhat closer to the average, though generally still below it. Pupils make most rapid progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and in Years 3 to 6, where teaching and the curriculum are strongest. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and those in danger of falling behind are given effective support from teachers, well-trained classroom assistants and outside agencies to help them catch up. As a result, standards in mathematics and science have risen since the time of the last inspection. The school diagnoses and caters effectively for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, for instance by providing specialist help for pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties. Pupils at an early stage of learning English are supported well, and make good progress in line with others.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils like coming to school and particularly enjoy opportunities to play and work together, for example by taking part in team sports. Their attitudes to learning are good and they work hard in lessons. Pupils respond well to the strong Christian values that the school promotes. One pupil remarked, 'There is a strong spiritual ethos in our school' and this is reflected in their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils have a good understanding of the need for rules. They are polite and respectful. Behaviour is good and effective support is provided for the small minority of pupils who find it difficult to manage their behaviour. Relationships are good and there are few incidences of bullying or racism. This creates a friendly and caring community where pupils feel safe. The participation of many pupils in the arts makes a considerable contribution to their cultural development, but they do not always have enough opportunities to learn more about others from different cultural and religious backgrounds. Pupils make a good contribution to the community as members of the school council and play leaders, and take on many other responsibilities around the school. They adopt healthy lifestyles

and show a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and taking regular exercise. They are prepared well for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Rigorous monitoring has successfully raised the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection. Generally teaching is good, although in Years 1 and 2 teaching is less often good and more often only satisfactory than in other years. Teachers plan thoroughly, taking good account of pupils' prior learning. They give careful thought to making teaching activities imaginative and inspiring. Work is matched well to the full range of pupils' ability, and teaching assistants provide very effective additional support. However, marking is inconsistent from class to class, and does not always show the pupils clearly how to improve the quality of their written work. Pupils display positive attitudes to their learning and enjoy working together. They are encouraged to discuss their work in pairs, and this helps them to develop good speaking and listening skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school offers an exciting and varied curriculum, providing good opportunities for pupils to develop artistic and musical skills. The emphasis on core skills enables pupils to make good progress in literacy, numeracy and science. These skills are celebrated through the high-quality displays of pupils' work. However, sometimes pupils are expected to complete too many worksheets, and this limits their fluency in writing. Information and communication technology is used effectively to promote learning across the curriculum. Enrichment of the curriculum is a strength. Work in class is greatly enhanced by trips and visits to a wide range of places of interest. There is a stimulating range of well-attended extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils from all backgrounds thrive as a result of the high-quality care and support that they receive. Procedures for ensuring the safeguarding of pupils are rigorous. Risk assessments are thorough and are regularly carried out for activities within and outside the school. Vulnerable pupils are very well cared for. The needs of pupils who have difficulties with their learning or behaviour are carefully identified. They are skilfully supported by staff and special programmes of work matched to their needs. As a result they make good progress. Support for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good, particularly for new entrants with little or no English. Pupils are well informed about how much progress they are making each term through learning conferences with teachers and parents. However, because the quality of marking is variable, some pupils are less well informed about the detailed steps they should take to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and her deputy have created a happy school, which, in the words of one governor, 'values all children and members of staff'. Leaders make a strong contribution to raising achievement. Their clear and systematic monitoring of teaching and learning since the last inspection has improved its overall quality. Their development plan is based on good self-evaluation and is sharply focused on raising standards further. The curriculum leaders are enthusiastic and committed, but do not have sufficient opportunities to meet and share ideas for improving the school. Governors provide effective support and are ready to hold the school to account. The school promotes community cohesion well, engaging with the diverse local community and encouraging pupils to understand the world beyond the school.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

19 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of English Martyrs Roman Catholic Primary School, London, SE17 1QD

We all really enjoyed visiting your school recently, and we shall not forget how friendly and cheerful you were, holding doors open for us and greeting us warmly. What impressed us most was how well you understand the school's values of faith, respect, responsibility, fairness, compassion and wisdom. You know that these values lead to your school being a happy and harmonious place, where each of you is important. In turn, you repay your school's trust in you by being kind and respectful towards one another. We enjoyed seeing you play together nicely and we noticed how well you behave in class. We also like the way most of you attend school regularly and punctually.

The adults work hard and look after you really well. They teach you well and give you an exciting curriculum with many opportunities for you to learn an instrument, create wonderful wall displays and perform to parents. We have asked them to make sure that all of you learn as well as possible, especially those of you in Years 1 and 2. We have also asked your teachers to mark your work even more carefully than they already do, to help you to continue making good progress. The adults have promised to do this, and some of them will soon be having extra meetings and planning how best to help you.

In the meantime you can play your part in helping your school to become even better by trying to live up to the school's values, and continuing to work hard. We wish you well in the future.

Yours faithfully

Natalia Power

Lead Inspector