

## English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

### Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103425
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	323822
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Krishan Sharma

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	410
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Patrick Gilsenan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Isabel Riley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	21 February 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Evelyn Road Birmingham B11 3JW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01214 643150
<b>Fax number</b>	01214 642578

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 March 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

English Martyrs' is a larger than average primary school. Although established to serve the local Catholic community, Catholic pupils currently represent a very small minority, as do those from White British backgrounds. An overwhelming majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, of which those of British-Pakistani origin are by far the largest group. Consequently, the proportion of pupils who have a first language which is not English is exceptionally high as is the proportion of those at the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is also above average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has risen and is now above the national average. The number of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the usual starting and leaving points is consistently above average. Three out of 14 classes are currently being taught by newly qualified teachers. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is catered for in two Reception classes.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

English Martyrs' Catholic Primary is a good school. Parents are very satisfied with the provision; as one of them commented, 'The quality and standard of education are good.' The school has improved since the previous inspection because the headteacher, staff and governors are all focused on priorities that matter. Standards have risen, particularly in Year 6 and are now broadly average. Given their very low starting points on entry to Reception, the school clearly promotes pupils' good learning. Good use is made of the local area and links with outside agencies to improve pupils' learning and their personal development.

Children make rapid progress in Early Years Foundation Stage. Their attainment on entry to Year 1 is below average but pupils achieve well to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Standards at the end of both key stages are often depressed by a high turnover of pupils, particularly by those who join and leave part way through the year. The school's records show that this often has a disproportionate impact on standards in Year 2 because some pupils are still grappling with the relatively early stages of learning English. Most pupils make good progress and achieve well, but progress is faster during Key Stage 2 because their competence in English accelerates as they move up through the school. The more able pupils make slower progress in some lessons because they are not given sufficiently challenging work and do not always have the necessary higher level of skills in English to support their good learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because they are consistently well supported.

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and is at its best in the Reception classes and in Key Stage 2. In most lessons, teachers familiarise pupils with new vocabulary. As a result, pupils cope well with new ideas and most make good progress. Planning, which is sometimes too tightly structured, and teachers' long introductions and explanations during lessons, do not always allow sufficient time and opportunities for pupils to work independently. As a result, their competence in taking responsibility for, and initiative in, their own learning suffers.

Pupils behave well and enjoy participating in a wide range of activities, particularly educational visits. The curriculum effectively consolidates pupils' basic skills and promotes their awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles. Good personal development is reflected in pupils' positive attitudes to learning and the ease with which they relate to pupils of different faith and culture groups. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are well looked after in the school; as one parent aptly noted, 'the staff are very supportive and have helped my child to build confidence'. Pupils demonstrate their concern for others in the community through willing contribution to local and national good causes. Pupils are given satisfactory academic guidance and helped to understand how to improve.

The leadership and management are good. The headteacher has taken a strong lead in moving the school forward. The systems for evaluating the provision are now robust enough to identify its key strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, the identified priorities for improvement are appropriate. Senior and middle leaders make an effective contribution to the success of the school. Given the level of accuracy in its self-evaluation and the recent track record of improvement, the school demonstrates a good capacity to improve further. The commitment to promoting community cohesion is strong and is at the heart of the school's work. Governors know the school's strengths and weakness and are now well equipped to hold it to account for its performance.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Most children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are well below the levels expected for their age. Many of them come with no, or very little, English. From these low starting points, they make good progress, particularly in acquiring early literacy and numeracy skills. Early assessments of children's skills ensure that staff have an accurate baseline on which to build. Children settle well because the induction arrangements are good. They behave well and relate well to each other in a wide range of situations. As children work and play in a caring and safe environment, they grow in confidence. Although adults strike an appropriate balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities, often, and unintentionally, they do too much for children. As a result, opportunities for children to learn to become independent are limited. The close observations of children inform their next steps in learning. Teaching is good and all adults have a good understanding of how children of this age learn and develop. The assigned key worker for each child liaises closely with parents and carers. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. There is a clear direction and a good team spirit in the Reception stage.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Make sure that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in older classes have sufficient opportunities to work independently and take initiative in their own learning.
- Improve teachers' planning to ensure that tasks given to the more able pupils are suitably challenging and prepare them for achieving higher levels of performance.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve broadly average standards. The unvalidated results for 2008 show a dip in English standards particularly in writing. The school has identified precisely the reasons for this decline and has put in place strategies to remedy the situation. These strategies are already having a positive impact and standards in writing are once more on the rise. Standards in Year 2 have been below average, but recent results show a rise and some narrowing of the gap between the national results and the school's. Pupils make good progress as they move up through the school, although it accelerates more in Key Stage 2 because of their incremental gains in acquiring competence in English. As a result, standards have improved since the last inspection, particularly in Year 6. Currently, an increasing number of pupils are working at the expected levels for their age across the school. However, the proportions of pupils reaching the higher standards of Level 3 and Level 5 are generally low. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities progress well because their needs are clearly identified and support for them is targeted well.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development is good. They behave well and enjoy their work. They try hard and as a result, they make good progress. Most attend regularly. Pupils say they feel safe at school. Bullying is rare but when it occurs, pupils say it is dealt with fairly and promptly. They have good social skills and a clear sense of right and wrong. Pupils follow the staff's good example and show respect for the range of cultures and ethnic groups present in the school.

They have a good awareness of eating healthily and most enjoy school lunches. They keenly participate in all the physical activities offered to them in school. Pupils enthusiastically get involved in community activities, both locally and further afield. Currently pupils are getting ready to take part in the 'Melt Pot', a music and cultural project which is part of an intercultural dialogue with some European countries. Good progress in language and mathematics, in their information and communication technology (ICT) skills and in their personal development demonstrates that pupils are preparing well for the world of work. However, they are less confident when taking initiative and working independently are required.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils work hard and make good progress in most lessons. Teachers regularly build pupils' technical vocabulary to ensure they learn new ideas well. Tasks are matched well to the age and range of abilities in the class, particularly for the lower and middle ability learners. However, the work given is not always sufficiently challenging for the more able and results in their slower progress. In some lessons, pupils spend too long listening to teachers, which limits their opportunities to work independently. Occasionally, activities are too structured to allow flexibility in meeting the needs that emerge during the lesson. Teaching assistants are used well in most lessons. Pupils' skills in assessing their own work are improving in those lessons where teachers make clear the benchmarks for success. However, this approach has yet to be consistently applied across the school.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school places a strong emphasis on meeting pupils' needs and developing their literacy and numeracy skills. The personal, social and health education programme is extensive and makes an effective contribution to pupils' good personal development. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, as is that for pupils who are at early and intermediate levels of competence in English. However, it is not as effective for those who are fairly confident in English and would benefit from developing their competence at a higher level. As a result, some of the more able pupils make slower progress. ICT is used satisfactorily to support pupils' learning in other subjects. The range of extra-curricular activities is limited, but the range of education visits is extensive. These visits provide numerous opportunities to extend pupils' experiences and for them to apply their language and personal skills.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Procedures for safeguarding pupils are securely in place. Pupils new to the school settle well because they receive good support and guidance. Pupils say they feel safe at school and know that if they had any concerns, they would be listened to and helped. The school works with a range of external agencies to ensure that its pupils' welfare needs are met. Most pupils attend regularly but efforts to improve the rate of attendance have met with limited success, often due to pupils' participation in religious observances. The school recognises that more needs to be done in analysing the patterns of absence and working with parents so that attendance improves. Academic guidance is mainly satisfactory and is good in some classes. Pupils have a

satisfactory view of how they are doing and what to do to improve. The support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language is clearly rooted in the systematic monitoring of their progress and the effective interventions that follow.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The current priorities for improvement clearly reflect the senior leaders' determination to secure improvements in pupils' achievement and their personal development. The school's monitoring systems are now strong enough to identify its key strengths and weaknesses. The school acknowledges that occasionally, lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' written work have insufficiently focused on the quality of pupils' learning and it is addressing this weakness. The use of data is regular and assists the school in tracking pupils' progress. As a result, challenging, targets are set. Sometimes they are too ambitious but they are nevertheless helping the school to raise standards. The two inclusion leaders effectively steer the support for the large majority of pupils with English as an additional language and for those pupils with additional learning needs. Consequently, most pupils in these two groups make good gains. Governors are supportive of the school. As a result of appropriate training, they are now suitably skilled to take on a critical yet constructive role in the life of the school. The school engages with its community well and continues to promote inter-faith understanding and respect for different cultures. As a result, racial harmony is good.

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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?	2
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 <sup>1</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	3
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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**

4 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, Birmingham, B11 3JW

Thank you for making our recent visit to your school such a pleasant experience. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, looking at your books and talking to you about your work. Here are some of the good things we found.

- Your school has made a lot of progress since it was last inspected in 2006 because all the adults have worked hard to achieve this.
- Most of you make good progress and reach the expected standards by the time you leave your school at the age of 11.
- You behave well and get on well with each other.
- You enjoy most lessons as your teachers teach you well.
- Children in Reception settle well and enjoy the activities that staff plan for them.
- Your teachers and other adults in the school take good care of you.
- Your headteacher, governors and all the staff are committed to making your school even better.

This is what we have asked the governors and the headteacher to do:

- make sure that you all have opportunities to be independent and to learn how to work on your own without much support from adults in the classroom
- make sure those pupils who are capable of doing harder work and achieving better results, do so.

On behalf of the inspection team, I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Krishan Sharma

Lead inspector