

# English Martyrs Catholic School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120306
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicester
<b>Inspection number</b>	339671
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alan Alder HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–18
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1047
Of which, number on roll in the sixth form	147
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Janet Washington
<b>Headteacher</b>	Marius Carney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 January 2007
<b>School address</b>	Anstey Lane Leicester Leicestershire
<b>Telephone number</b>	0116 242 8880
<b>Fax number</b>	0116 242 8881
<b>Email address</b>	office@englishmartyrs.leicester.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 34 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of students. They observed the school's work, and looked at lesson plans and school improvement plans, records on exclusions, attendance, racist incidents and bullying, policies and procedures for ensuring students' safety, and minutes of meetings. In addition to the parental survey, a sample of students completed a written questionnaire and a staff survey was also conducted.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress being made by students and how well teaching contributes to this
- the quality of self-assessment and improvement planning.

## Information about the school

The school has specialist status for the performing arts. It draws its students from a wide area, which extends beyond the city into Leicestershire. The proportion of students who are from minority ethnic groups is higher than nationally, as is the proportion who have English as an additional language. The proportion of students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average, as is the proportion who have a statement of special educational needs. A smaller proportion than nationally is eligible for free school meals. The principal took up his post two years ago.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good and improving school. In particular, students' academic progress and rates of attendance have improved markedly in the last year. Both the progress students make in their work and their personal development are good. The school's evaluation of its work is perceptive and accurate, resulting in its good capacity for sustained improvement.

The school's leaders place a strong emphasis on the importance of each individual student, on their academic education and their personal development. This has had a strong influence on the development of the curriculum, which provides a good range of courses and extra-curricular activities and caters well for the variety of interests and aspirations which students have. Its influence can also be seen in the detailed monitoring of the academic progress of students and the support for those of all abilities who are underachieving. The care, guidance and support provided for students are outstanding and are one of the causes of the recent, and continuing, very rapid improvement in students' academic performance and attendance. The parents who responded to the questionnaire were highly supportive of the school. A very high proportion said that their child enjoyed school and felt safe. Students too, in their survey were very positive as were the staff.

The teaching students receive covers the full range from outstanding to a very small minority which are inadequate. More than half the teaching observed during the inspection was good or better. Overall, the quality is satisfactory. Nevertheless, students' learning is good. This is a result of their positive attitudes to learning, the school's effective measures to help students in all years to make good progress, including one-to-one tuition, and their good attendance. Students readily engage in the activities that are provided for them. The extra tuition the school gives for them in order that they achieve their targets is plentiful and effective. Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive very good support. A positive feature of many lessons is the extent to which students work in small groups as well as independently. This, as well as the above average standards many are reaching, added to the fact that a majority of students study at least one vocational subject and develop a good understanding of enterprise, means that they are well prepared for their future working lives. This is confirmed by the fact that the proportion who leave without continuing their education or taking up employment or training is very small.

The school's specialist status is highly effective. The targets for examination performance in the specialist subjects have been achieved as have those for the number of students studying them. It has had a good impact on extra-curricular provision and has helped to develop links between the school and the local community. For example

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weekend courses, such as work on a musical production, bring adults and students together.

The principal has introduced much more challenging targets for student attainment. It is impressive that these have been largely achieved. His high expectations are an important component in the school's development. Those with responsibilities for subjects undertake detailed evaluations and from them develop plans for improvement. However while this helps to focus efforts, the purpose of the self-evaluations is not entirely clear. To some extent they, rightly, celebrate achievement; they also identify areas for improvement. However some key areas are not included, such as precisely what aspects of the subject students find difficult, so that a clear and concise judgement can be made as to what aspects of provision should be focused upon. The result is that improvement plans are too large. They also lack measurable aims as well as a means for checking periodically that the actions being taken are having sufficient impact. This means that the school's senior leaders and governing body are not able to monitor properly the progress being made so that more emphasis or resources can be applied where needed.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the quality of teaching by incorporating the features that enable students to be successfully challenged in the most successful lessons into the lessons of all teachers, so that attainment rises further.
- Ensure that the self-evaluations of departments and other areas of the school have a clear focus on improving students' performance and that, in the plans for improvement, progress can be periodically monitored though the inclusion of measurable targets.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Over the last three years students' attainment has been broadly average and was showing decline for some groups, but in 2009 showed a significant improvement. The proportion of students who achieve five or more A\* to C grades at GCSE is now above the national average. This includes performance in English. Attainment in mathematics is average but is improving rapidly, with some students now being successful in their GCSE examination in Year 9.

The data for the current Year 11 students show that the improvement shown in 2009 has been sustained. Most groups of students are making good progress and all groups are making at least satisfactory progress.

Students are well informed about how to keep themselves safe and how to lead healthy lifestyles. The school identified that a small number of students smoked and introduced a programme to help them to stop. This was effective in many cases. Behaviour is good, and students show enjoyment of learning and of their time in school. Students from different backgrounds mix well together and the school is an admirably harmonious community. Students report that there is little bullying, and that when it does occur it is

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usually dealt with quickly and effectively

A good indicator of the school's effectiveness is the extent to which students' confidence and maturity increases as they move up the school. The school's strong Christian values help to promote the outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. The latter is also helped by the performing arts status and the wide range of enrichment activities, including visits to theatres and the opera. Outstanding spiritual development was seen in a powerful Year 10 assembly, led by the students themselves, which provided exemplary opportunities for students to reflect on issues relating to war and remembrance. This is supplemented well by the extensive experiences offered through the performing arts status, most notably in the international arts festival. Students play an active role in school. They are involved in decision making and are confident that their views are taken seriously and acted upon.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Teaching is of satisfactory quality. Almost all is satisfactory or better, with some that is outstanding. Teachers know their subjects well and lessons are well-paced, usually with

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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a good range of different tasks and learning approaches. One of the good features of teaching is the care given to ensure that students of different levels of ability are catered for well in lessons. This reveals that teachers use their knowledge of students' abilities well when planning lessons. Teachers' use of questions is developing well. Questions are often asked which challenge the students to think, and sometimes to justify their point of view, rather than to repeat information the teacher has recently given. The use of questions to assess understanding so that the lesson can be adapted if necessary is in place, but not used frequently. In the less successful lessons the challenge for students was usually appropriate, but they were not given the help they needed in getting started with the work, sometimes because the tasks needed to be broken down into smaller steps. The marking of students' work seen during the inspection was always at least satisfactory. There were some very good examples of students being provided with clear and precise guidance for improvement.

The curriculum has a good range of options to cater for the different aspirations and interests of students. This includes a good range of vocational subjects, the opportunity to study a course at a local college, and to take GCSE examinations early. Some take GCSE mathematics in Year 9, for example. There is a good extra-curricular provision, enhanced by the school's specialist status.

The care guidance and support provided to students is outstanding. Its impact can be seen in rapidly improving attendance, attitudes, behaviour and hence achievement. The increasing emphasis on focused support for individuals to enable them to meet challenging targets is a particular strength, especially for vulnerable students. Their personal development receives good attention too. It enables them to play a full part in school life, for example through trips abroad, sport, and drama and music productions. The school works effectively with outside agencies to help those students and their families who may be facing severe challenges to succeed. The result is that the attendance of vulnerable students has improved well and it is very high for some. Students praise the school highly for the work it does in enabling them to transfer smoothly from primary school.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

There is a dynamism about the way the school is led and managed. Some areas have developed rapidly, whilst for others a more measured approach has been judged to be

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required. The principal has high expectations about what can be achieved and is realistic about what can be done quickly and what needs more time. The school has considerably revised its targets for students' attainment at GCSE and in 2009 most of those challenging targets were achieved or exceeded. A newly developed system for tracking students' progress is used well to ensure that individuals do not fall behind. Subject leaders reflect the increased emphasis on ensuring that all students prosper. The school's assessment of teaching quality is accurate and at times very perceptive and this is helping to develop teaching quality well. The governing body is very well informed and provides both a good level of challenge as well as good support. Governors show a good level of commitment too, for example, ensuring the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures and its policies to promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination.

The school's leaders are very actively promoting community cohesion within the school and to the wider community. The impact is visible in the attitudes of students, though its impact has not yet been formally evaluated. The school is also developing links with overseas communities, for example in Zimbabwe and India and it celebrates different cultures through special events such as Europe Day.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Sixth form**

The progress made by students on their A level courses is good, and at least satisfactory on their AS courses. This reflects the good teaching they receive: it develops both understanding and confidence. Students say that they are well supported in their



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preparation for life, work and study beyond school. The curriculum offers a good range of subjects, though the great majority are at advanced level.

Students' contribution to the community is good, for example through their involvement with charities, acting as reading tutors and mentors and through the performing arts specialism. It contributes well to their good personal development.

*These are the grades for the sixth form*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the sixth form</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for students in the sixth form	2
The quality of provision in the sixth form	2
Leadership and management of the sixth form	2

**Views of parents and carers**

Almost all parents speak highly of the school. There is a very high level of satisfaction with the safety of students at school, with the quality of teaching and the quality of leadership and management. Almost all parents said that their child enjoys school. Inspectors agree with the positive views that parents express about the school, though they judge the quality of teaching to be satisfactory rather than good.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at English Martyrs Catholic School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 1047 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	44	46	53	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	47	46	46	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	40	47	47	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	37	49	49	5	6	0	1
The teaching is good at this school	29	33	55	55	2	2	0	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	29	33	50	50	7	8	0	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	25	60	60	1	1	1	3
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	41	47	41	41	3	3	0	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	39	49	49	3	3	0	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	33	49	49	5	6	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	23	59	59	6	7	0	2
The school is led and managed effectively	37	43	46	46	1	1	0	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	47	41	41	3	3	0	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



6 November 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of English Martyrs Catholic School, Leicester, LE4 0FJ

Thank you for your help when we inspected your school. We spoke to a good number of you in meetings and during lessons. We have also read the questionnaires many of you completed. We were impressed by your friendliness and how confidently and articulately you talk to adults. Your good behaviour in class and your positive attitudes to work help you to do well. Your school is a very good example of a harmonious multi-ethnic community.

We found that your school is a good school and that it is getting better. We were impressed by how successful it has been in helping students to attend regularly and how the curriculum is designed so that there are suitable courses for students of all abilities and interests, especially in Years 10 and 11. You make good progress in your work. There has been a recent improvement in the examination results which students at the end of Year 11 receive. The information from your school shows that this is part of a general improvement.

You are well involved in the school community with the school council and the opportunities you have for extra-curricular activities, for example through your school's performing arts specialism.

There are two areas we have suggested your school works on. The first is to help you learn even better by encouraging your teachers to share their best teaching ideas with each other. The second is for heads of department to investigate what aspects of your work you find difficult and to see what they can do about finding more effective ways of helping you to understand those aspects. You can help by continuing to attend regularly.

Best wishes for your future.

Yours sincerely

Alan Alder

Her Majesty's Inspector.

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