

# English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

School Lane, Litherland, Liverpool, Merseyside, L21 7LX

**Inspection dates** 13–14 January 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The school is exceptionally well led and managed by a highly effective and strong headteacher and senior leadership team. Together they have the full backing of staff and governors in their aim to continually improve the quality of teaching, and ensure that pupils enjoy school and achieve well.
- Governors challenge the school and know exactly what it needs to do to further improve.
- The school is highly respected within the local community and parish. It supports its disadvantaged pupils outstandingly well, ensuring that they participate, and succeed, in all aspects of school life.
- The school is well on its way to fully implementing and further developing its new and outstanding curriculum.
- Pupils' attendance is well-above average. They are studious, love learning and have an exceptionally good understanding of how to improve their work. They behave outstandingly well at all times.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and work very well in partnership with teaching assistants to support pupils in their learning.
- Teachers plan activities in class that excite and engage pupils, with whom they have exceptionally good relationships.
- All pupils, including those with disabilities and special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils, make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' attainment by the time they left school at the end of Year 6 in 2014 was significantly above average overall, and outstanding in reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Parents are very supportive of the school, and are appreciative of the good communication that they enjoy. They are happy that their children are safe and well looked after.
- Early years provision in good in all respects, and has improved since the previous inspection.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all pupils achieve to the very best of their abilities in reading, writing and mathematics in every class, because work is not always challenging enough for the most able.
- Pupils do not always have opportunity to write at length to develop their writing skills further.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons in all year groups, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils, and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. Some lessons were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised during lessons and separately with senior leaders.
- Inspectors considered 70 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own surveys of parents' and pupils' views.
- A meeting took place with a representative from the local authority. Responses to a questionnaire completed by 38 members of staff were considered.
- A meeting was held with seven governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body.
- A range of school documents was examined. These included the school's review of its own performance, records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, external evaluations of the school's work, data on pupils' progress, records of pupils' attendance, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation.

## Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Barbara Harrold	Additional Inspector
Michelle Murray	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportions of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is below the national average. (The pupil premium is additional government funding to support those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.)
- Almost all pupils are White British. None speak English as an additional language.
- Nursery provision is part time. Reception provision is full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection a number of staff have been appointed, including a headteacher, several newly qualified teachers and an early years manager. The senior leadership team and governing body have been reorganised. Early years provision has been relocated to a new school annex, and outdoor playing areas have been remodelled.
- Pre-school and after-school services are run by local providers; these are subject to a separate inspection.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is outstanding across the school, and in so doing raise levels of attainment, particularly in Key Stage 1 by:
  - making sure that the most able pupils are always fully challenged by work that is hard enough to enable them to achieve to the very best of their ability
  - ensuring that pupils are given every opportunity to write at length to develop their writing skills further.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- Leadership and management are outstanding because the headteacher and senior leaders are highly effective in implementing new approaches in their pursuit of excellence in teaching and learning. This is exemplified in the school's outstanding new curriculum, and the work that teachers do to deepen pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world around them. The school's caring and nurturing Catholic ethos has helped to ensure that most pupils make at least good progress and attain highly in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6.
- The school's middle leaders, including those responsible for English and mathematics are well trained and play a very effective role in improving the quality of teaching. They have made it an absolute priority to ensure that pupils make good or better progress in all subjects across the school. They regularly deliver training to their colleagues. This has, for example, helped teachers to maintain exceptionally high standards in pupils' reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling in Key Stage 2.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils know about life in modern Britain and have a very well-developed understanding of its culturally diverse nature. They know about world issues through the study of the lives of great leaders, and understand the challenges that people face in developing countries through the school's long-standing relationship with a school in Sierra Leone. Pupils have a good understanding of the major world faiths such as Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism, and visit places of worship.
- Pupils have many opportunities to play string, brass and percussion instruments. They are especially fond of their residential learning in Years 5 and 6. Pupils have many opportunities to practise their reading and mathematical skills across the curriculum through their communication and well-being and enterprise and enquiry books. However, pupils do not always have opportunity to write at length.
- Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching, including in the early years, are rigorous. This helps senior leaders to continually monitor and support teachers in improving their practice. Senior leaders set teachers challenging targets, all of which are linked to improving standards of teaching and learning. They are careful to ensure that training and support are provided to help teachers to achieve their objectives.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity well. This helps to ensure that disadvantaged pupils achieve exceptionally well and that any gaps between the performances of different groups of pupils are narrower than those found nationally.
- The primary school sport funding is used very effectively in promoting the health and well-being of pupils, and in helping to develop staff skills in teaching physical education and sport. The funding has also helped to develop teaching programmes for gymnastics and enabled the school to refurbish and replace equipment such as ropes, benches and mats.
- The school has a good relationship with the local authority, and has worked with it in a number of areas, for example, to help manage the performance of the headteacher. In addition to this, the local authority has brokered consultancy support in areas such as safeguarding and governance.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors are well trained and know their school exceptionally well. They are longstanding in their roles and have dedicated themselves to ensuring that pupils succeed. Governors know that the quality of teaching is good because they receive regular reports from senior leaders and often come into school to see for themselves. They ensure that teachers are set challenging targets and are prepared to reward them when they meet their targets.
  - Governors know that pupils' overall performance in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 was outstanding. They are committed to ensuring that this level of performance is replicated at the end of Key Stage 1, and throughout the school.
  - Governors know that the pupil premium is making a difference to the lives and achievement of disadvantaged pupils. They are aware that the excellent support that these pupils receive from well-trained teachers and teaching assistants is helping to ensure that their performance is edging ever closer to that of their classmates by the end of Year 6.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.

- Pupils, including in the early years, behave very sensibly at all times. This includes when they are moving around the school, during lunch times and when playing with their friends.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. Their behaviour in class is second to none, they are very eager to talk about their learning and listen intently to their teachers. They get on exceptionally well with their class mates.
- Pupils' attendance is well-above average, which reflects their eagerness to come to school and learn with their friends. They are always smartly dressed and are very proud of their school. Pupils are very appreciative of their school and help to ensure that all indoor and outdoor areas are pristine and well looked after.
- Pupils are of the opinion that behaviour is good all of the time, and say that any minor disputes between friends are soon 'sorted out'. They are supremely confident in going to any member of staff if, for example, they have a concern and know that they will always be listened to and taken seriously.
- The overwhelming majority of parents are of the opinion that behaviour is good in school, as are staff. Inspection evidence, including an examination of the school's behaviour logs, shows that behaviour is typically outstanding over time.

### Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- All pupils, including in the early years, say that they feel safe and well looked after. Pupils have an exceptionally good understanding of bullying and say that it never happens at school because 'we like and look after each other'.
- Pupils know that discriminatory behaviour is wrong and say that what they learn in personal, social, health and citizenship education, and from visitors, has helped them to understand that no one should be treated differently because of where they are from, how they speak, how they look or what they believe in.
- The school's e-safety work is exemplary. Pupils know how to stay safe when online and are fully aware of cyber-bullying and how to avoid it. They know only to visit trusted websites and always check with an adult if they are unsure of clicking on a link or opening a 'pop-up'.
- The school's work with a range of health safety specialists is exceptionally good and helps pupils to understand dangers and risks. Pupils in Year 6 learn the skills of maintaining life in emergency situations and in Year 5 they learn about road safety and cycling proficiency. Pupils also benefit from anti-gun and crime drama workshops and learn about personal care and healthy eating.
- A wide range of visitors, including from the fire, police and social services help pupils to understand safe and unsafe situations.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching, including in the early years, is good. The design and organisation of classrooms and learning areas are exceptionally well thought out to promote learning, with high-quality displays of pupils' work and lots of useful information available to help pupils to develop their writing and calculation skills.
- Teachers' approach to fostering in pupils a love of books is highly effective. All classes have comfortable couches and pupils say that they are especially fond of their 'hot chocolate afternoons' when they put on their slippers and enjoy a good read.
- The vast majority of pupils, including in Key Stage 1, know how to improve their learning. Many can quote their targets in mathematics and English off by heart, and all know that if they are not sure that they can check in their books.
- Teachers make mathematics interesting and ensure that pupils know how important calculation and problem-solving skills are in everyday life. This was exemplified in a Year 4 class where pupils were asked to add the costs of a number of items of shopping and deduct them from a set amount of money, and in a Year 5 class where pupils' problem-solving skills were put to the test in working out a passage for Theseus through the Minotaur's maze.
- Teachers work effectively to develop pupils' confidence in sharing their ideas with classmates and leading and participating in discussions. This work makes a highly effective contribution to the development of pupils' speaking, listening and mathematical skills. Such skills are developed in pupils of all ages and were demonstrated by Reception children as they counted out various beats and rhythms in music, and by Year 5 pupils as they convincingly put together and shared their arguments for and against giving the Elgin Marbles back to the Greeks.

- Most pupils have a good understanding of the English language. This was shown in a Year 6 class where they demonstrated their excellent grasp of grammar and punctuation as they skilfully identified what constitutes a good 'X Factor' sentence. Pupils were then asked to write their own sentence using similes, alliteration and metaphors, and discuss what makes a good piece of writing.
- Teachers' marking is of a high quality. They take care to ensure that they always indicate to pupils how they can improve their learning and give them time to look at their comments and improve their work. However, the most able pupils are not always fully challenged to achieve to the very best of their ability and are sometimes given work that is not hard enough.

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The vast majority of pupils made at least good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and grammar and punctuation by the time they left school at the end of Year 6 in 2014. At this time their overall attainment in national tests was, after being broadly average in 2013, significantly above average, as it was in 2012. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly average. However, most pupils make good progress across Key Stage 1 in all subjects from often very low starting points.
- Children enter Nursery with skills and abilities which are below those typically expected for their age in most areas of learning. The good teaching and support that they receive through the early years helps to ensure that they develop well. In 2014 an average proportion entered Year 1 with good skills and abilities in most areas of learning.
- Pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics varies across different classes, particularly in Key Stage 1, because teachers do not always challenge them to achieve to the very best of their ability. However, the school's own tracking data show that so far this year pupils' progress is rapidly improving: more pupils are on track to attain the higher levels in all subjects at the end of Key Stage 1 than in previous years.
- Pupils make good and sometimes outstanding progress overall in mathematics. They were keen to inform inspectors that they enjoy this subject and like their homework challenges and the exciting mathematics games and learning activities available to them on the school's website.
- Most pupils progress well in developing their writing skills. Writing clubs and opportunities for them to write 'blogs', and compete in, for example, the '100 word challenge' are helping to ensure that their progress in this subject is rapidly improving.
- Pupils make good and often outstanding progress overall in reading, although the proportion secure at the national phonics (letters and sounds) screening check in 2014 was below average. Senior leaders are fully aware of this. School data show that their decisive action to provide training to staff and ensure that they take a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics is helping to raise standards in this area. Pupils are familiar with a wide range of authors, enjoy poetry and regularly read at home.
- Pupils with disabilities or special educational needs are exceptionally well catered for by well-trained teachers and teaching assistants. This helps to ensure that they make good progress in most year groups. In 2014 their attainment at the end of Year 6 in all subjects was much higher than for similar groups of pupils nationally, and outstanding in reading.
- The attainment of disadvantaged pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 was equal to that of their classmates in reading, two terms behind in writing and almost three terms behind in mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils' overall attainment in 2014 was equal to that of their peers nationally and approximately two terms ahead in reading. Any in-school gaps in attainment for pupils currently on roll are closing rapidly.
- Teachers usually set challenging homework activities which stretch the abilities of the most able. School data show that these pupils progress well across the school in all subjects. Their performance in national tests in reading, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling at the end Key Stage 2 in 2014 was outstanding.

### Early years provision is good

- All aspects of early years provision are good and have improved since the previous inspection. Although new to post in September 2014, the early years manager is very experienced and well organised. She has an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development in the early years and, with the full support of staff, has developed an action plan with clear priorities for the coming year.
- Children enter Nursery with skills and abilities which are below those expected for their age in all areas of learning, including speaking and listening and personal and social development. They learn in

exceptionally well thought-out and stimulating classrooms in Nursery and Reception, and benefit from good teaching and stimulating activities delivered by well-trained adults. As a result of this, about half of all children, including those with disabilities or special educational needs, enter Year 1 well prepared with good skills and abilities in most areas of learning.

- Children are very appreciative of their new and stimulating indoor and outdoor learning and play areas. Adults make exceptionally good use of these areas to develop in children a sense of excitement and discovery. This was exemplified when children in Reception were encouraged to uncover a number of clues, including footprints in the sand, in their quest to find *The Gruffalo*, and when they used their good information and communication technology skills to create windy and snow-storm conditions to see what would happen to the three little pigs' houses.
- Children work exceptionally well together and enjoy sharing their ideas and their resources. Teachers and teaching assistants regularly assess how well children are progressing and diligently record the development of their speaking, listening, number and calculation skills. This information is shared with parents.
- The early years team is keen to further involve parents in the learning of their children through, for example, induction meetings, developing starter packs, using 'blogs' on the school's website and producing information to further inform parents on the education standards that children are expected to achieve by the time they enter Year 1.
- Children behave exceptionally well at all times, which makes a good contribution to their good learning in Nursery and Reception. Parents are well informed about their children's development and are happy that they are safe and well cared for.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104931
<b>Local authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	453197

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	476
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Bernie Coxon
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lewis Dinsdale
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	31 January 2007
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 928 5601
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