

Inspection of a good school: English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School

School Lane, Litherland, Liverpool, Merseyside L21 7LX

Inspection dates:

8–9 October 2019

Outcome

English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Parents, pupils and staff agree that English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School is a happy, friendly and caring school. Leaders and staff encourage pupils to live out the school's catholic values in their words and deeds.

Pupils listen carefully to adults and to each other. They complete the tasks set for them. They take care with the presentation of their work. Pupils know their teachers will give them help when they need it. They also know that their teachers expect them to try their best.

Everyone's mental health and well-being is top priority. Pupils and teachers value their yoga and mindfulness sessions. The learning mentor takes good care of pupils. She helps them cope when life feels hard.

Leaders and teachers work closely with parents and carers. Early years staff help parents prepare their children for starting school. Staff keep parents well informed about how their children are getting on.

Everyone looks after each other and their school. Pupils are quick to help their teachers. They comfort their friends when they are upset. They make sure everyone has someone to play with at breaktimes. Pupils are adamant that bullying is very rare.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have set out detailed plans for different subjects in the school's curriculum. Teachers know what they must teach and when. Sometimes, teachers try to cover more than they need to. This means that sometimes important knowledge is not covered in sufficient depth. For example, in physical education (PE) staff teach pupils lots of different games. Pupils and staff agree that they would rather pupils play fewer games but do them well.

Teachers routinely check whether pupils have remembered what they have been taught. Teaching staff help those pupils who do not find learning easy. For example, in Year 5, before reading the class book, teaching staff explain the meaning of tricky words in the next chapter. This helps all pupils read the next chapter of the class book fluently and with understanding.

Teachers know how well pupils are getting on day-to-day. In religious education, mathematics and reading, leaders get just the right amount and type of information. This tells them about the progress pupils make in these subjects. It also helps teachers to know what they still need to teach. In addition, it means that teachers know whether extra teaching sessions actually help pupils who need to catch up. However, the information teachers collect for leaders is not so useful in some subjects, such as in PE.

Teaching pupils to read is very important at English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School. Staff make sure that the youngest children quickly learn to read. Adults use lots of ways to promote a love of reading in their pupils. This works well. Older pupils talked to me knowledgeably and enthusiastically about their favourite authors and styles of books. The school's approach to reading allows pupils to achieve well in this subject at the end of key stages 1 and 2.

In the early years, teachers make sure that new children settle in well. It is hard to believe that these children have only been in school a few weeks. They listen to their teacher, follow classroom routines and are kind to their friends. Children learn and achieve well in the early years compared to other pupils nationally.

Leaders set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. No time is wasted in lessons as a result. Pupils know how to keep themselves calm and focused on their learning. They told me how they practise the techniques learned in mindfulness sessions. Pupils' attendance at school is good. The school's 'don't miss the bus' initiative means that almost everyone is in school, on time, every day.

The special education needs coordinator and learning mentor support pupils who are struggling. They make sure that teachers put in place the right strategies to help these pupils. They work with other professionals to get expert advice and support when needed. They involve parents at every stage. This means that almost all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities keep up with their classmates.

Pupils are proud of the different responsibilities they are given. They make a positive difference both in school and the local community. For example, the school council are making sure that the nearby underpass gets a makeover. This means that local people will be able to cross the busy dual carriageway safely.

Staff told me how much they like working at this school. They feel appreciated by leaders, pupils and parents. They get on well together and willingly help each other. Leaders listen to staff views about any planned changes. This means that staff do not feel overburdened.

This is a popular, highly-regarded school. Very few children leave the school other than at the end of year 6. When families do leave the school, this is usually because they move out of the area.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that appropriate checks take place before adults work with children. Staff are up to date in their training. They recognise signs of possible abuse or neglect. Leaders make sure that record-keeping is meticulous. Children trust adults to listen to and act on any worries. Leaders work well with other professionals to support children and their families. Teachers make sure that pupils know about possible risks and how to keep themselves safe from harm.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject leaders have set out plans for what they want pupils to learn in different subjects. Some of these plans do not set out clearly enough which learning is the most important. This means that teachers sometimes try to cover more than they need to. Subject leaders should help teachers to focus on teaching the most important knowledge really well.
- Teachers assess pupils' learning day-to-day really well. However, leaders do not make as good use of this information as they could in some subjects, such as PE. They have already made changes to their assessments in religious education, and these have worked well, allowing teachers to plan more accurately and enabling pupils to know and remember more. Adopting this successful approach in other subjects would help to strengthen the quality of education across the curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School to be good.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	104931
Local authority	Sefton
Inspection number	10058050
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	456
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Bernie Coxon
Headteacher	Lewis Dinsdale
Website	www.englishmartyrs.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 January 2015

Information about this school

- This is a catholic primary school.
- The school had its most recent section 48 inspection, undertaken by the Archdiocese of Liverpool, in September 2019.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders and class teachers. I met with a representative of the Archdiocese and seven members of the governing body, including the vice-chair.
- I spoke to two groups of staff about their workload and well-being.
- I considered 57 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and 57 free-text responses. I also considered a letter from a parent.
- I considered 30 responses to the survey for staff.
- I met with the people responsible for safeguarding in the school. I scrutinised a wide range of documentation in relation to safeguarding. I spoke to staff and pupils about safeguarding. I also considered the survey responses from staff and parents around safeguarding.

- I observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and playtimes. I spoke to pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of pupils.
- As part of this inspection, I considered the school's approach to the teaching of phonics and early reading. I also explored how leaders plan and organise the science and PE curricula. I spoke to teachers and subject leaders. I visited lessons with subject leaders. I listened to pupils read. I talked to pupils about their learning and looked at the work in their books as well as other evidence of their learning.

Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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