

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, Sunderland

Redcar Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR5 5AU

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 February 2025

Outcome

English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, Sunderland has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Paula Cornell. This school is part of Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Brendan Tapping, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Daniel O'Mahoney.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils embody the values of this nurturing, caring and supportive school. Pupils' needs are at the heart of every decision the school makes. An atmosphere where respect is commonplace has been created by the school. Pupils flourish because they are cared for deeply. They are eager to attend school and enjoy their learning. As the school's mission statement says, pupils learn to love, learn and grow together.

Pupils feel safe and happy in this school. They are routinely kind to each other. Their behaviour at all points of the day is praiseworthy. The school has high expectations that everyone should be respectful, show kindness, be courteous, be determined and show care. These are impressively realised. The expectations are modelled by an extremely dedicated, caring and skilful staff. The school is a place where each pupil is known as an individual and treated as such.

The school is aspirational for all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is evidenced in the ambitious curriculum that the school has designed for its pupils. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, make strong progress through the curriculum during their time at the school.

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

Early reading is a high priority. Staff are skilled in delivering phonics sessions. The school quickly identifies those pupils at risk of not keeping up. Pupils read books that allow them to practise the sounds that they know. Positive attitudes to reading are encouraged from the early years and throughout the school. Children read a wide range of stories with their teachers. Staff model expressive ways of reading that are copied by children. Older pupils are equally positive about reading and see that it is important for their future lives and careers.

Children in early years are happy in school and enjoy their learning. For example, children in Reception talk excitedly about what they have learned about Florence Nightingale. The school ensures that children develop independence and curiosity well. Children show determination and perseverance in the varied and engaging learning opportunities made available for them. There is a strong focus on developing communication and number skills.

The school has established an ambitious and carefully designed curriculum. Careful thought has been given to what pupils learn and the order in which they learn it. For example, in Year 6, pupils first learn about climates, the impact of extreme weather and then the importance of the Amazon rainforest. This knowledge is then used to explore the impact of deforestation. Pupils can talk about the knowledge that they have learned in previous lessons. For example, Year 1 pupils talk about their knowledge of the senses they learned about earlier in the year. However, staff do not always provide pupils with the opportunity to link their current learning in lessons with knowledge learned about in previous year groups. As a result, some pupils are not able to make links.

The school ensures that pupils' needs are accurately identified and met. Pupils with SEND are provided with high-quality nurture and care. There are careful systems in place to ensure that vulnerable pupils get the help they need. The school's highly effective support for these pupils means that they achieve well.

The school tracks attendance closely and responds very quickly when concerns arise. It works closely with parents and carers to make sure everyone understands the need for children to attend school regularly. As one pupil said, 'If you're not in school, you don't learn.'

Children in early years settle to routines quickly. They concentrate well, listen carefully and take turns when they play and talk together as a class. Throughout their time in school, pupils are taught the importance of respect and helping others. This is reflected in their exemplary behaviour around school. Bullying is rare. Pupils know that it would be dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils understand that behaviour is not simply about following a set of rules but rather a way of living and acting, both inside and outside of school.

Pupils' personal development is a major strength of the school. The school's provision is designed to help pupils to understand themes such as online safety, positive friendships,

keeping safe and mental health. They take part in a variety of after-school clubs and experiences including board games, football, dance, arts and crafts and residential visits. Pupils are taught about the wider world in a way that is appropriate for their age and stage of development. They understand the need to care for others and how they can help to make the world a better place.

The school is well led and managed. Governors have a good understanding of the school. Staff feel that they are valued and trusted members of the English Martyrs' community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Staff do not always provide pupils with the opportunity to link their current work to knowledge learned in previous year groups. As a result, pupils are not always able to use this knowledge to help them deepen and extend their current learning. The school should ensure there are effective opportunities planned for pupils to revisit and recap their learning that has taken place in previous year groups.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, English Martyrs' Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School to be good for overall effectiveness in November 2017.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

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

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148913
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10346793
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	194
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Daniel O'Mahoney
CEO of the trust	Brendan Tapping
Headteacher	Paula Cornell
Website	www.englishmartyrssunderland.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has a religious character and is a Roman Catholic school. It was last inspected under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in September 2017.
- English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, Sunderland converted to become an academy in February 2022. When its predecessor school, English Martyrs' Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision.
- The school runs its own breakfast club and after-school clubs.
- The school is part of Bishop Chadwick Catholic Education Trust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders, special education needs coordinator and school attendance officer.
- In addition, the inspector spoke with members of the local governing body including the vice-chair, the trust CEO, members of the board of trustees and the deputy director of education for the diocese.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- During the inspection, the inspector observed pupils' behaviour in and outside of classrooms at different times of day. She spoke formally to groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around the school.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and information on the school's website.
- The inspector talked informally and formally with pupils and staff to gather information about school life. In addition, she took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of the views of staff, pupils and parents

Inspection team

Anne Vernon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2025