

English Martyrs Primary School

URN: 126051

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton

28–29 February 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

2

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

1

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

2

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

What the school does well

- Pupils flourish at this Christ-centred school: they are inspired to take a leading role in responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching and the mission of the Church
- Conscious that Christ is at the heart of the school, there is a lived sense of community, evident in the quality of relationships where everyone enthusiastically participates in and contributes to activities which reflect the life and mission of the school
- Leaders and governors are inspirational witnesses to the Gospel and to Catholic social teaching in their direction of the school at every level
- Teachers provide pupils with opportunities to present their learning by using a variety of forms of expression; as a result pupils enjoy their learning and approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm

- Pupils respond well to the wide variety of prayer and liturgy experiences provided by the school

What the school needs to improve

- Ensure that all teachers provide pupils with specific and focused feedback so that all pupils clearly know how to make progress in their learning
- Ensure all teachers have a high level of confidence and subject knowledge so that all lessons extend pupils in their learning
- Share best practice to ensure that all staff and pupils provide prayer and liturgy opportunities that are engaging and of a consistently high quality

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

1

Pupils at English Martyrs thoroughly understand and wholeheartedly embrace the Catholic life and mission of their school. They know what it means to be a “learning community in Christ”, how to put it into action and how to explain the distinctive ways in which theirs is a Catholic school. They are key players in living the mission. Pupils have a deeply embedded understanding of Catholic social teaching because it is central to the school’s curriculum, and they can explain various ways they put it into action, such as donating food to the local foodbank or raising money for the Turning Tides homeless charity. Pupils are very proud of their school and rightly so; they are happy, confident and feel secure. One pupil said: “I would recommend anyone to come to English Martyrs School because there is always someone to help you. There are a lot of kind people here.” Pupils highly value leadership roles and speak confidently about their impact, particularly in the Cafod Club, Social Action and Liturgy Team and as House Captains, for example with the House Captain choosing a charity for the Lenten Fundraising Friday and explaining to the younger children how it links to Catholic social teaching principles.

Staff commitment to the school is impressive because of the passion and determination of the head teacher, who successfully aspires to create a Christ-centred community. Staff embrace these aims and work tirelessly to demonstrate them: they say the head teacher “ignites the light of passion” and therefore they all “share the same values and ethos”. They are exemplary role models for pupils through their relationships with each other and the love and care they show for pupils; they consistently bear witness to the school’s mission by, for example, willingly participating in and leading fundraising activities in their own time, such as the Race for Life in support of cancer research. There is a gentleness evident in the relationships between staff and pupils; everyone’s contribution is valued resulting in pupils’ being encouraged and enabled to

make a real difference, for example a pupil who proposed the beach clean initiative in response to curriculum learning on plastic pollution. The school environment is attractive and well cared-for, reiterating the school's commitment to its Catholic life and mission, with numerous display boards telling of the pupils and staff involvement in such things as the Cafod Live Simply Award and the Year of Prayer.

Leaders and governors are unwavering in their commitment to their school's Catholic life and mission, resulting in a genuine commitment to all the families they serve and a desire to fully put into action their calling as followers of Christ. The head teacher's personal witness and passion is a key driver in this and inspires the whole community, by for example leading the Cafod Club, supporting worship in both parishes and establishing and leading the Social Action and Liturgy Team. One staff member expressed that, "The head teacher brought the Catholic life back into the school." Governors are diligent about their role within the school, supporting and challenging leaders and ensuring that Christ is at the centre of their decision-making; this can be seen in their regular monitoring, visits to the school and such initiatives as paying for the school's application for the Oscar Romero Award. Leaders and governors have highly successful strategies for engaging with parents including those who might be hard to reach or vulnerable. Of particular note is the number of parents and carers who regularly attend events such as Celebration of the Word at school. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school; one parent commented, "We love the Catholic life and mission of this school and are proud to belong to this Catholic community."

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

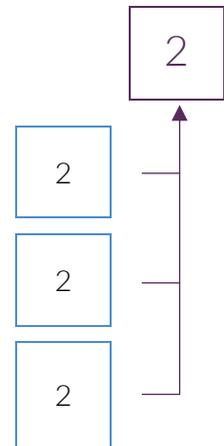
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Pupils enjoy their learning in religious education and approach their lessons with interest and enthusiasm. This results in good behaviour. They relate their learning to their own experiences; even the youngest pupils are learning to put themselves in the position of key characters from Bible passages and reflect upon them. For example, during a lesson about the Good Samaritan in Foundation Stage, children were able to understand how to be a good neighbour with responses such as, “You could be kind to each other”. Pupils speak with confidence about their learning in religious education and demonstrate their growing religious literacy. They can confidently link their learning in religious education to the principles of Catholic social teaching, for example relating Jesus’ example of washing the disciples’ feet at the Last Supper to the principles of the preferential option for the poor and human dignity. Pupils particularly appreciate the creative opportunities offered to them such as designing and drawing a redemption tree to explain the link to original sin or the use of Godly Play in understanding Bible stories. Whilst pupils talk confidently about how their work is assessed and marked by themselves, their peers and teachers, they are not always clear about what they need to do to improve their work.

Most teachers and teaching assistants have secure subject knowledge because of the ongoing training provided by the school. All adults are deeply committed to the value of the subject, seeing it as the “core of the core”. They recognise that religious education has an impact on the moral development of pupils and encourages them to think about the life choices they make. In a Year 2 lesson about Lent and giving, for example, pupils were asked to think about linking their ideas to the principle of promoting peace. Teachers use questioning well during lessons to identify where pupils are in their understanding and through persistent questioning extend learning. The use of “I wonder” questions and tasks is a particular strength as it encourages

pupils to apply their learning to their own lives; for example, “I wonder why Jesus trusted in God”. Pupil effort is frequently celebrated leading to good levels of motivation for pupils. Their work is displayed in various parts of the school, such as on the Catholic social teaching boards in the shared spaces and the Mission Statement board in the hall. The use of written feedback is extensive but is not always precise and detailed enough to identify the next steps for pupils.

Leaders and governors ensure that the school curriculum is a faithful expression of the *Religious Education Directory* and that religious education has equal status with other core subjects regarding staffing, curriculum, timetabling, and resources. They have put in place effective systems to help staff with their subject knowledge, and both subject leaders support staff with religious education. This has been particularly important with the introduction of the new *Religious Education Directory* and relevant staff have attended some training at a Diocesan level, which has been highly effective in helping them to deliver the new resources. Religious education is enhanced by several enrichment activities and focus days, such as the opportunities to watch the “Life of Christ” play at the Wintershall Estate and regular visits to the parish churches, all of which help to set the subject within the school’s broader Catholic curriculum. Leaders and governors’ self-evaluation of religious education is informed by monitoring and evaluation, including records of learning observations, internal and external moderation meetings and pupil voice exercises. This allows them to accurately identify the main strengths and areas for development and they should now ensure that their monitoring cycle permits them to check that actions are being taken and improvements made.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

2

Pupils participate well in the wide variety of prayer and liturgy opportunities provided because they are central and routine to daily life in the school. They are reverent, respectful and sing joyfully and can articulate where prayer has called them to action, such as the weekly missions they are set at the Friday Gospel assembly. Pupils understand the Church's liturgical year well and know that this influences the rhythm of school life. They make connections between the cycle of seasons and various school events such as why the procession for Our Lady happens during the month of May. Pupils work well with their peers and teachers to prepare prayer and liturgy experiences and undertake their liturgical ministries willingly. In some classes where this is embedded, it is an engaging and inspiring experience; for example, in a Year 4 class, pupils prepared and led a well-planned liturgy based on the theme of helping others. This strong practice now needs to be shared across all classes so that all pupils can confidently and independently lead prayer and liturgy in an age-appropriate way.

Prayer is included in all celebrations and assemblies. Scripture is a key feature of all prayer and liturgy; passages used are liturgically appropriate. For example, senior leaders lead a Gospel assembly for pupils each Friday, focusing on the Gospel's message from the following Sunday. Through such opportunities, leaders act as role models for staff and pupils as leaders of prayer and liturgy. This contributes to the staff confidence in working with pupils, enabling them to lead their own sessions of prayer and liturgy. Staff are committed to being good role models; they use their individual gifts and talents to enhance prayer and liturgy in the school, for example leading the singing, liturgical dance or using their creative skills to enhance the May procession. The experience of living and working in a faithful, prayerful community has a very positive impact on all pupils' spiritual and moral development. There are a few attractive and thoughtful prayer spaces around the school but this is something the school should now look to increase, thereby

maximising the opportunities for prayer available to staff and pupils. Parents, carers, wider family members and parishioners are all welcomed into school regularly for prayer and liturgy; one parent commented, "It is an absolute joy to attend Masses or liturgies and hear the whole school sing the hymns so beautifully."

Leaders ensure the school calendar reflects significant dates in the Church's calendar, resulting in a wealth of opportunities for pupils to celebrate the Eucharist and other traditions of the Church. This includes the school's feast day, holy days of obligation and a recent 50th anniversary Mass celebrated by the Bishop: all these services are well attended by members of the parish and parents. Leaders and especially the highly-skilled headteacher, offer opportunities for the professional development of all staff including liturgical formation and support for planning and leading prayer and liturgy; this has resulted in more staff being skilled in their prayer provision. Governors, many of whom are members of one of the parishes, have excellent knowledge of the community's needs. They participate in prayer and regularly engage in pupil conferencing about collective worship which enables them to have an accurate picture of the strengths and areas for development. One recent visit, for example, showed them that the pupils are readily making links between their prayer and the actions this calls them to take in relation to the Cafod Live Simply Award. There are strong links with the two parishes and both parish priests are regular visitors to the school, celebrating Mass as well as supporting staff and pupils in their prayer life.

Information about the school

Full name of school	English Martyrs Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	126051
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9383345
Full postal address of the school	English Martyrs Primary School, Derwent Drive, Goring-by-Sea, Worthing, BN12 6LA
School phone number	01903502868
Headteacher	Helen Townsley
Co-chairs of Governors	Frances Amos and Humberto Gonzalez
School Website	www.englishmartyrs.w-sussex.sch.uk/
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	15 th June 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Michael Lobo
Hilary Blake

Lead
Team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement