

DIOCESE OF NOTTINGHAM INSPECTION SERVICE



SECTION 48 INSPECTION REPORT

(Section 48, Education Act 2005)

English Martyrs Catholic Primary School
Willow Crescent
Oakham
Rutland
LE15 6EH

2nd November 2011
(Autumn Term 2011)

URN: 120228

SECTION 48 DENOMINATIONAL INSPECTION REPORT

School:	English Martyrs Catholic Primary School Willow Crescent Oakham Rutland LE15 6EH
Headteacher:	Mrs Sue Hooley
Chair of Governors:	Mr Joe Scott
Date of Inspection:	2 November 2011
Inspection Team:	Mrs Anne Recchia
URN Number:	120228
Overall Grade Awarded:	2

Common grading scale for all inspection judgements	
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Description of the school

English Martyrs Catholic School is a smaller than average school situated in the town of Oakham. It is the only Catholic school in the county of Rutland and as such serves a wide and varied catchment area which includes families from approximately 40 villages. At the time of inspection there are 101 pupils on roll of which 46% are baptised Catholics. 40% of all pupils are from other Christian faith backgrounds and 15% are not affiliated to any faith. A lower than average number of pupils have particular learning needs and a small minority of pupils have English as a second language. The background of pupils varies but, overall, is neither strongly advantaged nor disadvantaged. Standards of religious knowledge and understanding on entry to the school are below average. Inward pupil mobility has some impact on standards further up the school as cohorts are generally quite small. In January 2011, a hard federation was formed with St. Augustine's Catholic School in nearby Stamford. The school shares a Governing Body, a business manager and the one headteacher serves both schools. The school has achieved the Active Mark.

Overall effectiveness

English Martyrs is a good school which is very close to becoming outstanding in some areas. The outcomes for pupils are good and the school is committed to improving standards through the quality of teaching, resources, an exciting and creative curriculum and effective assessment.

The leadership and management team are highly motivated and are keen to move the school to outstanding. They have the skills and motivation to do this. The wealth of data that has been collected should now be used to make more strategic plans for the future to really challenge pupils and drive up standards to enable the school to achieve at the highest level.

The school is very inclusive in nature. There is a genuine questioning philosophy within the school that encourages innovation and challenges thinking. Staff development has been well designed to improve teaching and learning.

The school effectively provides a good Catholic education for its pupils. Relationships are well developed and there is a good sense of trust. Pupils are very well cared for. Their spiritual, moral, ethical and social development is given high priority in the school.

Overall effectiveness	Grade: 2
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What does the school need to do to improve further?

English Martyrs is a good school but strives to continually improve. In order to develop further the following development points are recommended:

- Within Religious Educations lessons, teachers need to plan differentiated tasks which are tailored to pupils' differing levels of ability and use a range of questioning techniques which challenge the most able pupils enabling them to make more rapid progress.
- Use the wealth of assessment data and monitoring information in a more detailed and strategic way to target underachievement and challenge both the teaching and learning in Religious Education.
- Continue to develop the skills of pupils from an early age to plan and lead acts of collective worship.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

Since the last inspection, all the issues raised have been addressed. Teachers have been well supported in taking on the teaching of Religious Education. Continuing professional development has been well planned and has targeted teaching and learning effectively. Monitoring and evaluation have improved and these activities are now informing planning. The school's self-evaluation is both accurate and honest and is based on sound judgement after careful monitoring. The school now needs to engage with the data collected in a more in depth way to really develop a more strategic plan to effectively challenge any underachievement and target individuals or groups of pupils who may be in need of additional support.

The headteacher, staff and Governors are very committed to further developing the links with St. Augustine's as part of the hard federation of schools. The joint development opportunities are being well used and benefit both schools. The Governors are becoming much more skilled in supporting the headteacher and leadership team. The teachers are a coherent team who work well together. The school therefore has a good capacity to improve further in the future.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement	Grade: 2
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<p style="text-align: center;">PUPILS How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups</p>
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The majority of pupils enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with little knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and make good progress in their first year of full time schooling. Many are able to join in simple prayers of the Church, know that there is a God who loves them and are already able to identify signs and symbols of the sacrament of Baptism. The relationships they have developed with the adults in the class are good and enable them to have confidence in voicing their opinions and asking questions. They play cooperatively together and have a level of concentration appropriate to their age and maturity.

Progress in key stage 1 is good. Pupils are learning at a good pace so that by the end of the key stage nearly a quarter of the class achieve a level above national expectations. During the inspection, most pupils were able to explain why certain signs and symbols were used in Baptism and could re-enact the baptismal service in their role play.

In key stage 2 pupils are taught in mixed year groups and as a consequence, the range of ability in Religious Education is more extensive. Pupils are encouraged to be inquisitive and reflective and their work reflects this. By the end of key stage 2 some pupils are able to reflect on their learning and can explain how religious values and beliefs influence their own lives and experiences. The majority of pupils reach standards in line with expectations in Religious Education but due to the small cohorts, individual performance can have an impact on overall performance year on year. Different groups of pupils make similar levels of progress; however, the level of challenge does not always test the most able in all classes. The school is aware of this and is beginning to set more ambitious targets. Currently, most pupils are on target to reach these. The introduction of target cards has enabled pupils to assess their work and know what is required for the next stage in their learning. Pupils enjoy their Religious Education lessons and respond very positively to the creative approach adopted by the school.

The extent to which the pupils benefit and contribute to the Catholic life of the school is good. They take on leadership roles both within their own classes and in the school as a whole and are able to articulate well the distinctive nature of the school. One pupil said that the school 'helps us understand God and helps us to behave like Jesus'. The school council is involved in some of the decision making at English Martyrs School, they value their role and are able to speak about how they work together to bring about change. Pupils value the work they undertake on other faiths and cultures and enjoy experiencing this through visitors, visits and dedicated days throughout the year. They are able to reflect on links made with local, national and international charities and understand that they need to consider the needs of others less fortunate themselves. The older children have the opportunity to attend a residential experience at the Briars.

The hard federation with St. Augustine's School in Stamford has led to many opportunities for pupils to work and play with one another. The recent Diocesan Big Assembly was an opportunity for both schools to experience together the extent of the diocese. Pupils are keen to make these links stronger and have many creative ideas to achieve this; this augers well for the future.

The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are polite and show genuine care and concern for one another. They show an understanding of the need to be forgiven and to forgive and spoke very positively about the way pupils are helped to do well and achieve in all aspects of school life. They appreciate that staff in the school treat them fairly and without prejudice.

Pupils respond with reverence and are keen to participate in acts of collective worship. They have a good understanding of religious seasons and feasts. They were able to answer questions about All Souls day and showed in their actions and prayers an understanding of the feast. During the day of the inspection many children added to the remembrance tree established in the whole school act of worship. They are becoming skilled in the use of scripture and prayer in their own class worship. This is an area

identified for further development so that pupils are skilled from a very young age to plan, lead and participate in collective worship.

How good outcomes are for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups	Grade: 2
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LEADERS AND MANAGERS

How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils

Good leadership and management have led to improvements in outcomes for pupils and the provision for the Catholic life of the school through careful and incisive planning, monitoring and evaluation. The headteacher, school leader and Religious Education coordinator are deeply committed to the Catholic ethos of the school. They provide a rich, broad and balanced curriculum where spiritual and moral development are a priority and permeate all aspects of the school.

Monitoring both of the Catholic life of the school and curriculum Religious Education has been a priority of the school since the last inspection. There is a good tracking system in place that identifies individuals and groups of pupils. The analysis and evaluation of this raw data is beginning to inform planning and has identified issues that are being addressed in the school improvement plan. Leaders and managers have created a climate of open discussion and analysis and this has led to a more evaluative approach both by the staff and pupils. The Catholic life of the school is regularly monitored through observations of collective worship, regular discussions with pupils and staff and scrutiny of planning. This has led to positive developments in liturgy and prayer. The headteacher ensures that Religious Education and the Catholic life of the school are regular agenda items in both staff and Governors' meetings. This high priority has ensured that the Catholic mission of the school is a lived experience in English Martyrs school and is greatly valued by pupils and staff alike.

Community Cohesion at English Martyrs School is promoted to a good level. Relationships within the school are good and inclusive. Pupils work cooperatively together and value the work they do as a group and individually. The hard federation of schools has given opportunities for pupils from slightly different backgrounds to work together. Leaders and managers are developing links with a school in Leicester to further improve the opportunities for pupils to work with pupils from different backgrounds. They are given opportunities to work with the parish and local community. Pupils regularly take part in County wide events such as the 'Ring and Sing' and the 'Hippo Trail' where they are able to engage with other adults and children.

The school newsletter and prospectus have a very prominent Catholic identity. Parents are well informed about their child's progress and general school and parish events. Parish links are strong with regular weekly visits by the parish priest and shared events and liturgies being a regular occurrence throughout the year. The parish catechist is involved in the preparation of children for the sacraments both in school and in the parish. Resources for this preparation are paid for by the school and valuable curriculum time is taken up with this. It is vital that this current arrangement is reviewed with

immediate effect and that sacramental preparation does not take place during the school day.

Pupils are able to develop skills for dialogue and collaboration with people of different beliefs and values during well planned world faith weeks that often include visits to different places of worship and visitors from other faiths and cultures. Leaders and managers are keen to promote community cohesion through informed charitable giving. The school has good links with a school in Malawi where letters and information are exchanged. The school regularly supports both UK and global charities ensuring pupils have an understanding and compassion for those less fortunate than themselves.

The Religious Education coordinator has been in post since September 2011 but is already building on the good work of the previous coordinator. The Religious Education development plan is well targeted at areas in need of development and there is a clear plan of action to address these. Her use of the inspection evaluation schedule is very good and serves as a working document that informs planning and development. The school is making good use of training and advice available from the Diocese. In this way, the continuing professional development of staff has been given a high priority in the school. This has resulted in all staff showing confidence in assessing pupils' work in Religious Education and adapting planning and teaching to engage all pupils. Expectations are shared amongst the staff and there is a genuine sense of trust. The school has, as a consequence, a group of skilled and competent teachers who can now all teach Religious Education to a good standard. There is substantial evidence that standards as a result are improving rapidly.

The Governing Body is both supportive and challenging of the leadership team at English Martyrs School. There is a good level of expertise and they are proactive in determining the Catholic direction of the school. They have become more involved in the monitoring and evaluation of the Catholic life of the school and of standards in Religious Education. Their comments and suggestions have become more focused as they gain knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and of teaching and learning. In this way they are fulfilling the role of critical friends of the school with confidence. They are reflective of the decisions made over the recent federation with St. Augustine's School and are aware of the benefits that this has brought to both schools. They are seeing the benefits of sharing good practice and have reconstructed committees and working practice to make the most of the shared expertise.

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school	Grade: 2
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PROVISION

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic Education

The standard of teaching is good with some examples of outstanding practice. Teachers work hard to plan interesting and creative lessons to engage pupils; as a consequence, pupils make good progress in lessons. Teachers show good subject knowledge and where teaching is outstanding they challenge all pupils to extend their learning and reach their full potential. This outstanding practice should be regularly shared with others to improve standards even more and challenge the most able pupils in particular. Assessment has improved since the last inspection, teachers are more confident in levelling work and give good feedback to pupils both orally and in writing to enable pupils to improve.

Good and imaginative use is made of resources especially ICT to enhance teaching and maximise learning. Cross curricular links are made with drama, English, art and music to good effect in order to further appeal to different learning styles. Other adults are used effectively in lessons. They are well prepared and use good questioning skills to support pupils' learning especially those who have particular learning needs. Differentiation is generally by outcome or support. However, some of the more skilled teachers use questioning effectively to challenge pupils. The Religious Education curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual and moral development. The extracurricular provision at English Martyrs School is good, there is a good take up and pupils enjoy the many groups and activities on offer.

Pupils' self-assessment is at an early stage and needs to be developed further. Target cards are used in most classes to assess progress and inform pupils of the next step in their learning. Progress towards achieving these targets is monitored but more careful evaluation of this data suggests that some of the more able children are not being sufficiently challenged. The effective use of 'driver words' has focused attention on what is required to reach the next level and teachers are confidently assessing and levelling work. They should now focus on setting challenging and realistic targets to ensure that all pupils make expected progress and that outcomes continue to improve.

Acts of collective worship are varied and well planned. They are given a high profile by the school and are well resourced. The school provides opportunities for personal and collective prayer and is skilled in the use of interactive displays to engage pupils around the school. The monitoring and evaluation of these has led to improvements. Much of the worship is adult planned and led. Pupils enjoy participating in liturgies but must now be given opportunities from the earliest years to plan and lead their own liturgies. The school is well placed to develop this aspect of the liturgical life of the school further.

How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education

Grade: 2

Inspection Judgements Summary

Overall effectiveness – How effective the school is in providing Catholic education.	2
How good outcomes are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups.	2
How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic life of the school.	2
How effective the provision is in promoting Catholic education.	2
How good OUTCOMES are for pupils, taking particular account of variations between different groups.	2
How well pupils progress and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	2
Taking into account:	
<i>pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education;</i>	2
<i>the quality of pupils' learning and their progress;</i>	2
<i>the quality of learning for pupils with particular learning needs and/or disabilities and their progress.</i>	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life of the school.	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	2
How effective LEADERS AND MANAGERS are in developing the Catholic life of the school.	2
How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and plan improvement to outcomes for pupils.	2
How effectively leaders and managers promote Community Cohesion.	2
How well leaders and managers at all levels monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan for improvement to outcomes for pupils.	2
The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are tackled decisively and statutory and canonical responsibilities met.	2
How effective the PROVISION is in promoting Catholic education.	2
The quality of teaching and how purposeful learning is in Religious Education.	2
The effectiveness of assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education.	2
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs.	2
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	2