



# English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School Newcastle

URN: 148445

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of Bishop Stephen Wright, Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle  
14–15 November 2024

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

#### 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

1

The school is fully compliant with the general norms for religious education laid down by the Bishops' Conference

The school is fully compliant with any additional requirements of the Diocesan Bishop

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

2

## Compliance statement

- English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School is fully compliant with the general norms of religious education as laid down by the Bishops' Conference.
- English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School is fully compliant with all requirements of the Diocesan Bishop.
- English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School has responded and met the areas for further development which were identified during the last inspection in October 2017.

## What the school does well

- English Martyrs' is a truly unique school which serves its diverse community generously and inclusively.
- A culture of welcome pervades all aspects of school life, including the Oscar Romero Centre, and pupils and parents feel highly valued. They are proud to be members of the community.
- Leaders are inspirational in creating a school which is rooted in the teachings of Christ.
- Prayer is at the heart of English Martyrs', living out the mission statement and 'Be-attitudes' with passion.
- Staff are excellent role models and therefore pupils are highly respectful and behave well in religious education lessons.

## What the school needs to improve

- Ensure lessons are carefully planned to provide all pupils with opportunities to develop deep thinking which is tightly linked to the learning intention.
- Ensure teachers accurately assess pupils understanding in lessons and over time so that feedback is clear, effective and leads to securing higher order skills.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding of scripture sources.

## 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 are excited and very proud to be part of English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School because they know they are valued in their uniqueness and are loved. They describe the school as, 'A safe place where everyone is respected.' They recognise their responsibility to treat others with kindness because of the culture of care which pervades school life, and they understand that their gifts and talents should be used to support their local and global community. Because there is a strong focus on Catholic social teaching across the curriculum, pupils are able to link the teachings of Christ to their actions. The school is truly a place of sanctuary and pupils know that they contribute significantly to this. A Year 5 pupil was proud to explain that, 'Pope Francis told us that we should work hard for the poor- not just people who don't have money, but all people who don't feel safe or have left their home in another country.' The school serves its diverse community extremely well and remains deeply rooted in faith. Consequently, the school mission, 'loving Jesus, loving learning, loving life,' is profoundly experienced by all members of the English Martyrs' community.

Staff ensure that the Catholic character permeates all aspects of school life. They are excellent role models and create an environment that distinctly reflects the mission of the Church. Consequently, pupils are inspired to respond to the teachings of Christ in their actions. Staff develop displays that are vibrant and inspiring, and therefore they help pupils to explore their own beliefs and opinions. They are enthusiastic about providing wider opportunities beyond the curriculum and they generously support one another to ensure that school life is a joyous witness of its Catholic charism. Pupils feel warmly welcomed because of the care given to them by all staff. Parents deeply value the efforts made by all adults to understand their child's context and needs, and the support families receive impacts significantly upon their wellbeing. One

parent explained, '... I really trust (the teacher) because she helps us and doesn't judge.' The commitment to all pupils, most notably the vulnerable, is exemplary. Pupils who are educated in the Oscar Romero Centre (Additional Resource Provision) are warmly welcomed to contribute to school activities. Pupils from a wide range of cultural and belief traditions are fully embraced and because of the encouragement staff give them, they enrich the school greatly.

The headteacher is an exemplary role model as a witness to the gospel, and as a result, all members of the senior leadership team make certain that the teachings of Christ and Catholic social teaching permeate the curriculum and wider life of the school. They have ensured that the 'Be-attitudes' are fully known and embedded. Consequently, pupils develop ambitious characteristics that make them valued citizens. Leaders prioritise the wellbeing of all, and policies ensure that all members of the school community are treated with respect. School leaders pursue opportunities to work collaboratively with the parish community and actively contribute to Diocesan initiatives. In doing so, they ensure that Christ is always at the heart of school. Parents understand and value the school's mission because leaders seek every opportunity to make sure that the Catholic character is lived out. Parents acknowledge that this has a profound impact in supporting them as their child's first educator. Governors are highly supportive and are regular visitors to school. They are therefore well informed when making decisions that impact upon the Catholic life and mission of the school. They embody the Church's preferential option for the poor, generously deploying resources so that all pupils are, 'loving learning, loving life.'

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

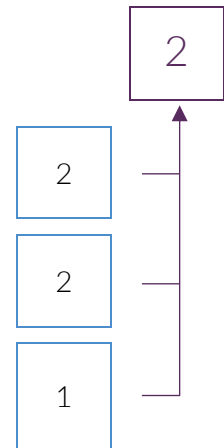
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

#### 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



From their starting points, most pupils make good progress in religious education and can work independently. They can talk about their learning and how it informs their actions. A focus on recalling prior knowledge ensures that pupils are supported to know and remember what they have learned. Pupils, including those with additional needs, make progress because of the adaptations that are made for them to access lessons. Because religious vocabulary is prioritised, pupils are developing religious literacy. They can use their knowledge and skills to think ethically and most pupils recognise the demands of religious commitment in day to day life. Pupils behave well in lessons because they are keen to develop their understanding and are usually engaged. They typically concentrate well to produce work which is well presented and usually appropriate to their age. However, tasks do not always allow pupils to respond fully to the learning intention of lessons. Pupils enjoy opportunities to respond in lessons in varied and creative ways. They benefit when work is modelled and feel proud when their work is displayed. Pupils particularly enjoy learning about world faiths and are enthusiastic when they are encouraged to share their own faith traditions with others. They are enthused by enrichment opportunities in religious education lessons, including visits to places of worship and visits from people of faith.

Teachers prioritise religious education and plan lessons that reflect the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. They build their subject knowledge and confidence through frequent professional development. Teachers recognise how pupils learn, particularly in relation to their age and stage of development and consider religious education to be, 'the core of the core at English Martyrs.' Consequently, pupils are developing an understanding that reflects the planned learning. All adults make a positive contribution to learning and therefore pupils are supported to work towards age-related expectations. Teachers use questions to identify

misconceptions and address these by adapting strategies to meet the differing needs and understanding of their pupils. However, feedback does not always clearly indicate to pupils what they need to do to improve work. Varied tasks ensure that pupils remain interested although tasks do not consistently support pupils to demonstrate fully the learning intentions and do not always allow pupils to think deeply. Scripture is used in lessons, but pupils have a limited understanding of scripture sources. Staff have recently developed structures to build demanding lessons, however this is not embedded and there are some inconsistencies in standards. Teachers warmly praise pupils' efforts and allow opportunities for reflection. In doing so, they promote the moral and spiritual development of pupils.

Leaders have developed a systematic process of monitoring and evaluating the provision and outcomes in religious education which identifies strategic action. They have therefore ensured that the planned curriculum is sequential and progressive across the school and have also ensured that lessons are well resourced. Governors contribute to self-evaluation processes and are regularly updated about developments in religious education. They are therefore able to make informed decisions that promote developments within the subject. The religious education 'curriculum champion' is highly dedicated and her support is greatly valued by colleagues. Her guidance and advice impact positively on staff confidence and a culture of openness ensures that less experienced teachers know they can seek help at the earliest opportunity. Her colleagues consider that she is inspiring in the way that she shares her passion for the subject. Because leaders prioritise professional development, the subject knowledge of teachers is supported, and standards are therefore comparable with other curriculum areas. Leaders give teachers the opportunity to work collaboratively, and consequently, pupils have equitable experiences in classes within year groups. School leaders engage proactively and positively with the wider community to provide a range of opportunities across the year to enrich the curriculum.

## 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

1

**Provision**

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

**Leadership**

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

1

1

As a result of the many opportunities provided, pupils engage joyously and participate willingly and confidently in a wide range of prayer and liturgy experiences. This was evident in a whole school celebration of the word where pupils of all ages sang their school hymn with pride and enthusiasm, whilst also demonstrating that they are able to reflect quietly during the 'pause, ponder and pray' part of worship. Pupils articulate confidently how prayer positively influences them; they know that there are different ways to pray, and they are reverent and respectful of one another's beliefs. Pupils know that they can pray anywhere, and they independently and regularly use prayer spaces provided for them, including the prayer room and garden. Pupils take great pleasure in working alongside staff and each other to prepare creative celebrations of the word. They undertake their ministries with confidence and skill, and they understand the importance of their role. When asked about the importance of leading prayer experiences, one Year 6 pupil commented, 'It teaches the younger children different ways to pray. For example, we taught them the rosary. They always leave the prayer room with a smile!' Pupils are developing an ability to evaluate what they have prepared.

Prayer and liturgy are central to English Martyrs' and the spiritual development of all pupils is supported because staff regularly offer varied prayer experiences, the spiritual development of all pupils is supported. Staff are excellent role models and therefore pupils participate reverently and spiritually. Staff inspire pupils to plan celebrations of the word which are meaningful. Across the school, pupils are confident and competent in leading prayers and reflections, appropriate to their age. Prayer is part of the rhythm of every day and is adapted to reflect the liturgical season. Staff ensure that pupils recognise the centrality of scripture and the liturgical norms of the Church and so pupils reflect these in their own planning of celebrations and participate fully. This was evident in a pupil-led worship during lunch time when the scripture chosen by the

pupils reflected the theme of remembrance. Prayer spaces across the school are cherished by people of all faiths because attention is given to ensure that these are sacred areas. Staff ensure that all families are welcomed and included in the prayer life of the school, with one parent commenting, 'School is a family, it isn't just talked about, it is lived.' All these opportunities combine to ensure that prayer and liturgy has a profoundly positive and lived impact on the school community.

Leaders prioritise the prayer life of the school and are inspirational role models in leading prayer experiences. They have a secure understanding of the liturgical year, seasons, and feasts and therefore ensure that prayer and worship are relevant and have a clear purpose and message. Leaders ensure that there is a planned programme of prayer and liturgy, including Mass, which promotes the active engagement of all. They ensure that staff are skilled in developing pupils' ability to plan and lead celebrations of the word. As a consequence, by the time they reach Key Stage 2, pupils can lead with high levels of independence. Leaders seek the views of pupils when monitoring the provision of collective worship to inform strategic actions and consequently they ensure that the prayer life of the school reflects the character of the community in which they serve. The headteacher passionately prioritises the spirituality of every member of the school community and governors ensure that this area is well resourced. There is a genuine commitment from all leaders to ensure the school does all it can to inspire, support and develop its community and prepare its pupils for the next stage in their faith journey.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148445
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3913650
Full postal address of the school	English Martyrs' Catholic Primary School, Beaufront Gardens, Fenham, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE5 2SA
School phone number	01912747463
Headteacher	Maria Elliott
Chair of governors	James Lawson
School Website	www.emcps.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	Non-selective
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	October 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	1

## The inspection team

Barbara Reilly-O'Donnell  
Julie Carr

Lead Inspector  
Team Inspector

## 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