



Diocese of Arundel and Brighton

INSPECTION REPORT

English Martyrs Catholic Primary School

Derwent Drive Goring Worthing West Sussex BN12 6LA

Telephone: 01903 502868

e-mail address: www.englishmartyrs.w-sussex.sch.uk

DfES Number: 9383345

Headteacher: Ms Susan Harrison
Chair of Governors: Mr Ron Noakes

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Bishop of Arundel & Brighton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 19 April 2012
Date of previous inspection: 4 June 2009

Lead Inspector: Mr Michael Sheridan
Associate Inspector: Mrs Angela Ireland

Description of School

The school is voluntary aided. It is situated in the Deanery of Worthing in the Diocese of Arundel and Brighton. It is maintained by West Sussex LA. The principal parishes which the school serves are English Martyrs, Goring and St Michael's, Worthing. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholics is 84%. The average weekly proportion of curriculum time given to Religious Education is 8.9% in Key Stage 1 and 10.8% in Key Stage 2.

The school takes pupils from 4 to 11 years. The number of pupils currently on roll is 210. The attainment of pupils on entering the school is overall below average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free schools meals is below average. Around 22% of the pupils receive extra support in class. At present only one pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Pupils who come from ethnic minority heritages are few but are increasing gradually year on year. The proportion of pupils from homes where English is an additional language is significantly below average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Satisfactory; Grade 4:
Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

English Martyrs is a good and improving school with many outstanding features, particularly in its Catholic life. It is a caring, nurturing school that embraces pupils of all abilities and cultures. The headteacher employs an effective, devolved style of leadership so that there is a clear strategic direction within a strong Catholic ethos. The governors give strong support to the senior leadership team, balanced with sufficient challenge, and there are very good links with the two local parishes. The quality of the prayer life of the school is extremely strong. Community cohesion is outstanding and pupils form positive relationships with each other and the staff, whom they respect and trust. As a result, leadership and management of the Catholic life of the school are outstanding. One parent wrote, 'It's a great school with a great Catholic ethos,' whilst another commented, 'I feel the school has given my daughter an excellent start to her school life. It is an extremely caring and happy environment with a strong emphasis on being responsible and how important it is to care and be respectful towards others.' The mission statement, 'To accept each individual as they are and to enable them to develop their full potential within a Christ-centred, worshipping community in a spirit of love, happiness and understanding', is central to the philosophy of the school and owned by all. As with the leadership of the school, the staff work very well together as a team. The inspectors agree with the school's self-evaluation that curriculum Religious Education is good. Through its school improvement planning, the school has correctly identified areas for development in Religious Education which will lead to improved provision and provide a strong foundation for raising standards of achievement. The continued development of vibrant and interactive focal areas, reflecting the liturgical calendar in all classes, enhances this provision. The monitoring role of the coordinator has been further developed to support this by analysing individual progress of pupils and building up a

portfolio of moderated work. Since the last inspection the advice from the Diocesan adviser has been acted upon and is bearing fruit in the consistently high quality of the pupils' higher order questioning in Religious Education. Also, the school has introduced a series of open-ended assessment activities and written tasks which challenge the more able in the subject. This is continuing to develop well, with termly analysis and review being undertaken by leadership at all levels. The tracking of pupil progress is also developing well, with a robust system put in place during the previous academic year which enables the school to address pupil underachievement more effectively. As a result of the school's targeted planning, the capacity of the school community to improve and develop is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further develop Assessment for Learning so that it has a positive impact on pupil outcomes for Religious Education
- Ensure that there is greater consistency in interactive marking across the school and that pupils are given sufficient time to respond to teachers' comments in their Religious Education books
- Further develop Religious Education tracking systems in order to refine targets and ensure that all pupils are making the maximum progress possible.

The Catholic Life of the School

Leadership and Management

Grade 1

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The school's leaders successfully promote a welcoming and caring ethos, which reflects Gospel values and the mission statement of the school. The religious artefacts and icons on display around the site mark the school as distinctively Catholic. For example, in the hall a striking statue of the Risen Christ takes pride of place, whilst on the windows of the Atrium there are extremely attractive artistic crosses produced by pupils in the after-school art club. In addition, photographs of the Pope and the Bishop are prominently displayed in the foyer. The school has adopted a collegial approach to leadership where the hard-working headteacher successfully leads an outstanding team to promote and provide a very clear direction for the Catholic life of the school community. Leaders at all levels communicate a strong sense of purpose to ensure that each child is given a wide range of opportunities to unlock their potential spiritually, morally and academically. The school is a vibrant community with the welfare of pupils at its heart. Pastoral care is outstanding and the work of the play therapists, mental health workers and learning mentors who support pupils and their families through difficult times, such as bereavement, trauma or loss, is an excellent example of the support pupils receive under this provision. Since funding has recently ceased for the mental health workers, the school has ensured a seamless transition by providing training for its learning mentors to continue with this extremely important role. Pupils with additional needs are well cared for and the contribution of the support staff in

enabling them to progress is outstanding. The governors work as a cohesive team and give support and challenge to the senior leadership team as and when appropriate. Along with the headteacher, they firmly establish the strategic direction of the school. Collectively, they provide an environment where pupils feel safe. Very good links exist with the parishes and parents through communication and liturgical or social events. The parish priests of the two local parishes are welcome and regular visitors to the school and make a significant contribution to the spiritual and pastoral life of the school. Parents are kept informed through an informative and user-friendly website. Pupils' leadership skills are developed and refined through the very active School and Eco-Councils. These are excellent vehicles for the pupil voice to be heard and to help pupils learn about how the democratic process works within a community. As a result, pupils flourish and commit themselves to the school's mission.

The Prayer Life of the School

Grade 1

The prayer life of the school is outstanding. The prayer box near the Atrium, the commemorative cross in the field in memory of a deceased member of staff and the Labyrinth give outstanding opportunities for personal prayer and reflection. During the inspection, pupils particularly expressed their appreciation of the school providing them with the opportunity to visit the Labyrinth. There is a well planned programme of Masses and liturgies which follow the Church's liturgical year. Governors regularly attend Masses celebrated in school and actively support the provision of collective worship. During the inspection, the vibrant assembly on the gifts of the Holy Spirit, led by the headteacher, gave pupils the opportunity for reflection. The pupils were involved as talk partners and representatives from each class were invited by the headteacher to open up a tantalising gift-box, which revealed attractive helium-filled balloons, each inscribed with one of the seven gifts of the Spirit based on the writings in the Hebrew Scriptures of the prophet Isaiah. Other pupils were involved in supporting the headteacher with multimedia technology, operating the music system and the PowerPoint slides during the assembly. The singing was joyful and the pupils responded with great exultation and expectation. A great variety of prayer styles was evident during the course of the inspection. These included the formal prayers of the Church, songs of worship and spontaneous prayer. Pupils were also given opportunities to write prayers and ask for prayer by placing personal intentions in a prayer box which is situated near the entrance of the school building. The box is taken to school Masses as a prayer offering. The school celebrates six Masses over the year, which are well attended by parents and celebrated by two parish priests. The school also attends Masses in the parish where pupils are involved as readers and servers. The headteacher provides the school community with a 'Thought for the Week', based on the Sunday Gospels. This is displayed in each classroom. The school supports the two parishes in preparing pupils for First Holy Communion and First Confession. The parish priests make a significant liturgical and pastoral contribution to the life of the school, for example, by responding to the 'Big Questions' left by pupils in a special classroom box provided for this purpose. Challenging questions such as, 'Why can't the Chosen One be a girl?', drawn from the Year 2 Big Question box, illustrate that pupils are employing higher order thinking to good effect and exercise the parish priests' pastoral and theological skills. Pupils enjoy posing these questions, even though they may find this activity challenging. One pupil said, 'If it was easy, you would be bored.' The parish priests also celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the school during Advent and Lent. As a result of the above, the prayer life of the school makes a powerful contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils.

How effectively does the school promote community cohesion? Grade 1

The promotion and achieving of community cohesion within the school is outstanding. Inclusion is at the heart of the school's mission. Pupils who have additional educational needs are supported and nurtured by the dedication and work of the whole school community. The richness in diversity of the community is celebrated in events such as International Week. For example, during the week, a parent from the Indian community helped pupils to dress in traditional Indian costumes. Visits to other places of worship and visits from members of other faith communities greatly help pupils to appreciate the richness in the traditions and culture of other world religions. The school is to be commended for providing pupils with these excellent sources of enrichment. These events are well supported by the Religious Education curriculum and by high quality resources. There are numerous clubs which enable pupils to develop their gifts and talents. The pupil voice is respected through the work of the school's Eco-Council and Student Council. There are many links with the Deanery and local schools. The Deanery schools work collaboratively through, for example, shared in-service training (INSET), a pupils' conference, a teachers' Mass and a Christmas carol service. In addition, all the headteachers from the Deanery schools meet on a half-termly basis. There are strong links with the local Palatine special school. For example, their pupils are invited to join some of the school's clubs. The school is generous in supporting charities such as the local St Barnabas care home, Help for Heroes, and Cafod. In addition, the school supports a charity for Crohn's disease sufferers. The school has adopted a community school in Romania and has had one Romanian pupil visit the school. The Early Years Foundation Stage has links with a school in France and there are links nationally with schools via email, which the school is seeking to develop further. Links with other countries enable the pupils to gain a deeper insight into different cultures and traditions. The 'Friends' of the school have representation on the Governing Body and raise funds to support the school community and its various charities. The Summer Fayre and Easter Egg hunt raise funds to support the development of future school initiatives. The School Council have their ideas considered by senior leaders. This has led to improvements in the school environment, such as the procurement of new football nets and new taps for the wash basins. Hence, pupils grow in understanding their responsibility for meeting the needs of others and respecting diversity, locally, nationally and worldwide.

Religious Education

Achievement and Standards in Religious Education

Grade 2

Attainment on entry to the school is below average but the school works hard so that by Year 6 the pupils' attainment matches national averages. Given pupils' starting points, speaking and listening is well developed and the presentation of their work is good. Work in their Religious Education books includes a variety of interesting ways to record learning activities, such as the provision of photographic evidence and hard copy outputs from information and communications technology (ICT). The school's robust tracking of pupil progress analysis indicates that pupil attainment in Religious Education is in line with English in Year 2 and Year 6. Attainment in the subject exceeds English in all other years. Hence progress in Religious Education is good overall. Pupils with additional educational needs progress particularly well because of the targeted and outstanding support they receive.

Observations in lessons and scrutiny of pupils' Religious Education books show that empathetic skills are well developed. Relating to the resurrection of the Lord, Year 2 pupils responded to the question, "What would Mary be thinking" with "Astounded and confused" and "She thought Jesus would be dead forever". Pupils have a wide ranging religious vocabulary which is systematically developed in both key stages. For example, pupils in Year 1 knew the meaning and significance of Jesus' resurrection using sentences and phrases such as, 'God gave him new life' and '(so that) we could live'. Pupils enjoy Religious Education and take great pride in setting up the prayer tables for reflection during their lessons.

Teaching and learning in Religious Education

Grade 2

Teaching and learning of Religious Education is generally good with some outstanding features. Teachers have excellent relationships with their pupils which promote a calm atmosphere conducive to learning. In lessons judged by the inspectors to be good or better, the pace is brisk, planning is meticulous and ensures that there is a good balance between teacher input and pupil activity. Teachers have very good behaviour management skills and use a wide variety of teaching methods, such as role play, skilful questioning and talk partners to engage pupils' interest. During the inspection, clear objectives and a range of learning activities matched to pupils' abilities featured in all lessons observed. These were supported by a range of tasks which were evident in pupils' books. Teaching assistants are a strength of the school and are well-deployed by the class teachers. In a good class lesson in Key Stage 2 on, 'How the Holy Spirit makes every day a Holy Day', the teacher used challenging questions and activities to enable pupils to recall the events of Pentecost and, in particular, to encourage the use of the empathetic skills of the most able. These were asked to focus on the feelings of the Apostles as the day of Pentecost progressed. The progress made and the challenges presented by the teacher for pupils to address were examples of some outstanding features contained within the lesson. The age appropriate focal areas in the classrooms enrich pupils' experience of Religious Education and assist them in their prayer life. The school is working hard to ensure that the quality of these focal areas are constantly under review so that the displays, produced collaboratively by the pupils and their teachers, are of a high quality or better and reflect the themes of the 'Here I Am' Religious Education Programme and the liturgical year. Assessment for learning is developing and strategies are in place to ensure that this area will be targeted effectively. Interactive marking is in place but time is not always given for pupils to respond to their teacher's comments. Tracking of pupil progress is being addressed throughout the school with the on-going support of the local authority. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress in Religious Education. They receive helpful information in termly Religious Education newsletters to enable them to offer their children support in the subject at home.

Quality of the Curriculum

Grade 2

The curriculum time the school sets aside for Religious Education is 8.9% in Key Stage 1 and 10.8% in Key Stage 2. Aggregated across the whole school, this fulfils the 10% requirement stipulated by the Bishops' Conference and by the Diocese. The 'Here I Am' Religious Education programme is successfully employed by the school to meet the recommendations of the Diocese and of the Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools. It is carefully coordinated with personal, social and health education (PSHE) and linked together with education in personal relationships (EPR), incorporating sex and Religious Education (SRE), which is taught in the context of the Church's teaching. The Religious Education

programme is also linked to social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) and to Circle Time. Good detailed planning in the subject ensures good coverage and caters for all abilities. The study of world religions is enriched by visits to local churches and other places of worship, such as the local synagogue for Year 3 and the local mosque for Year 4. In addition, guest speakers are invited to visit the school in order to talk to the pupils about their culture and traditions. These include an annual visit from a local Imam and visits from work colleagues of a Hindu parent to talk about the culture and traditions of the Hindu community. There is a very good range of resources to support Religious Education, including class sets of age appropriate Bibles being made available in every class. Levels of funding in Religious Education match those of the other core subjects. The use of ICT supports the subject very well. Hence, the curriculum in Religious Education makes a good contribution to the spiritual and moral development of the pupils and they are taught to respect other faiths and cultures.

Leadership and management of Religious Education

Grade 2

Leadership and management of Religious Education are good. A strong team ethos ensures that Religious Education is at the heart of the curriculum and maintains a high profile throughout the school. The governors, headteacher and all members of staff work closely together to promote the Catholic ethos of the school and to ensure that pupils receive a firm grounding in the knowledge and understanding of their faith. The newly appointed coordinator is developing her role well and attends Diocesan training on a regular basis. This has greatly benefited all pupils because it has led to the robust delivery of Religious Education. The subject is supported by INSET and staff professional development. Of particular note is the training, led by the Diocesan adviser, on higher order questioning by pupils which is now embedded within the school's Religious Education provision. The Deanery Religious Education coordinators meet to discuss issues such as assessing and moderating pupils' work. This good practice should have a continued positive impact on standards in the subject as this initiative continues to develop. Staff are well briefed and governors are aware of the importance of Religious Education. They attend a school improvement planning meeting and a self-evaluation day annually with the staff of the school. There is a link governor who works closely with the coordinator and they meet regularly to monitor pupils' work. The impact of these interventions is seen in the good progress that the pupils make. Parents are informed of the 'Here I Am' Religious Education topics at the beginning of each term.