

English Martyrs Catholic Primary School, Preston

URN: 119605

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Lancaster

19–20 June 2025

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

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

2

Compliance statement

- 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 laid down by the Bishop of Lancaster.
- The school has responded fully to the areas for improvement from the previous Catholic school inspection.

What the school does well

- A happy, welcoming and inclusive school that has a very strong Catholic identity.
- A safe, caring and nurturing school family that has very strong relationships with its families and is firmly at the heart of the community.
- A dedicated and committed headteacher who is driven and passionate about providing the best opportunities for every child.

- A fully inclusive and diverse school that welcomes and embraces all children and families from all world faiths and cultures.
- A committed and caring governing body who recognises, as guardians of the faith at English Martyrs, their responsibilities to uphold the highest Catholic standards possible for all.

What the school needs to improve

- To ensure that the partnership between the school and the local parish is fully promoted and established.
- To provide further opportunities to enrich the newly embedded religious education curriculum.
- To develop a whole school skills-based programme which builds on pupils' ability each year to lead prayer and liturgy independently.

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 understand the distinctive Catholic nature of English Martyrs and are able to clearly articulate its unique charism and mission. They can speak about the school mission statement and how this guides them in their daily lives. Pupils are proud to be part of the English Martyrs school family and shared with inspectors how learning about Jesus helps them feel confident, knowing that He is always with them. Pupils feel valued, safe and cared about, stating that they know exactly what to do if they are worried about anything. They have a clear understanding about following the teachings of Jesus and their responsibilities to help those in need, giving many examples of who they had helped in the local, national and global areas. Pupils show commitment to responding to the demands of Catholic social teaching. They would further benefit from opportunities to deepen their understanding of the theology underpinning their actions. They spoke about the school values being rooted in Jesus' teachings and how these helped them with their behaviour in and out of school. Pupils at English Martyrs are respectful to each other and emphasise the importance of equality for all. Pupils should continue to learn about beliefs and practices of faiths beyond their school community.

Pupils were able to share how the current chaplaincy provision helps them. The school also needs now to further engage with the local parish to ensure that partnership between the school and parish is central to Catholic life.

The mission statement is lived out by all in school and is clearly embedded. It has a significant impact on school life at English Martyrs and staff respect and embrace its purpose. Staff are fully committed to the school and their dedication to helping the pupils and their families is very clear to see, as they go above and beyond to fulfil their recognised vocation, as evidenced in the many positive parental questionnaires and discussions. English Martyrs has a very

welcoming environment and provides a safe haven in the centre of the community. It has shared its excellent practice with many other schools. English Martyrs is a welcoming, caring school that welcomes all pupils as unique children of God. Staff are excellent role models and the support they have for each other is evident. There is a strong team spirit and staff feel valued and happy working at this school. They provide the highest levels of pastoral care for pupils and their families, including the most vulnerable. The environment is beautifully cared for and depicts the distinct nature of a Catholic school. English Martyrs provides a range of well-planned and effective opportunities for the spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff. The provision for relationships, (sex) and health education meets diocesan requirements and is clearly embedded in the curriculum.

Governors are committed and passionate about English Martyrs, recognising their duty and responsibilities as guardians of the Catholic life and mission of the school. They are regular visitors and are proactive in ensuring that Christ remains at the centre of everything in school. Governors engage with the diocese and are committed to attending governor training and development days provided by the diocese. Governors work effectively with the senior leadership team and monitor and challenge standards regularly. English Martyrs has strong relationships with the parents/carers and there is evidence to demonstrate how this has impacted pupils positively. Leaders and governors are committed to Catholic social teaching and shared many examples of how they have helped the most vulnerable in society. The staff feel looked after by the leaders and governors and the headteacher and senior leadership team support one another's wellbeing effectively. Governors are kept well informed by school and the development plan has a clear Catholic focus. Self-evaluation is effective and accurate. Staff have received appropriate career professional development and induction processes are secure and effective.

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

2

Provision

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

2

Leadership

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

1

2

Pupils are developing good knowledge across the *Religious Education Directory* and can recall prior learning. They are beginning to make links to their everyday experiences and recognise how their faith shapes who they are. School have made the decision to implement the *Directory* across all year groups which has ensured that there is a fully sequenced and progressive curriculum in place. Pupils are religiously literate and can express their thoughts and feelings well. They did, however, find it more challenging to deepen their answers and make links past their everyday experiences. Pupils clearly enjoy religious education lessons and recognise the importance and centrality of the subject. Pupils were engaged within their lessons and contributed well; at times the pace could have been increased to ensure all pupils were contributing fully. Less teacher led activities would allow more children to be actively learning. Pupils' work and books are a strength in many year groups, but further embedding is required to ensure consistency across school. Pupils are appreciative of the variety of tasks given to them which adds to their enjoyment of the subject. Pupils know how well they are doing and, in most cases, understood how to further improve their work. Attainment is in line or slightly above other subjects.

The teachers' subject knowledge in religious education is a real strength of the school; this is clearly having an impact on the pupils and the progress they are making. Teachers show commitment to the teaching of curriculum religious education and ensure it is well planned, resourced and assessed. The assessments highlight next steps for groups of children and are adapted to meet the needs of all learners. Teachers are secure in their questioning of the pupils; the next step would be to further develop the children's oracy skills so that they are able to show their understanding and make scripture links. Teachers clearly ensure they plan a wide variety of creative and innovative tasks for the children to engage in, which adds to their

enjoyment. For example, in one class, pupils were taught about trust and faith with the teacher demonstrating this using a blindfold and navigating through the classroom, trusting another's directions. This helped children understand the importance of trust in the darkness. As the *religious education directory* is now implemented, it would be beneficial to consider ways to enhance further teaching and learning by using enrichment activities for the pupils, which will help them to deepen their understanding in the subject.

Leaders and governors ensure the religious education curriculum meets the directory requirements and has full parity with other core subjects. Monitoring and evaluation of religious education is rigorous and purposeful, and outcomes from this process directly inform the school's ongoing programme of professional development. This has led to teachers feeling empowered and confident in their teaching of religious education. The subject leader has a clear vision, and her expertise and high standards are having a positive impact on standards. This is effectively shared with and embraced by staff. She has shared this knowledge with other diocesan schools to support and develop local cluster groups. Leaders ensure that the curriculum is sequential and systematic, meeting the needs of all learners. External support has been bought in to enhance and develop teaching and learning. Leaders monitor and challenge standards in order to set clear actions for improvement which are reviewed regularly. Governors are well informed about standards in religious education and understand both the strengths of the subject and the challenges that staff can face to deliver the faith in a way that is meaningful, inclusive and accessible to all pupils.

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

1

2

Pupils at English Martyrs engage respectfully and reverently to prayer and liturgy experiences. They are eager to take part and lead class-based worship and shared with inspectors how much they enjoy this opportunity. Older pupils are confident to plan, with support from their teachers and lead with reverence and respect. This can be developed to extend their skills and knowledge through meaningful evaluations. Pupils read confidently from the Holy Bible and reflect in silence as they consider the scripture they have heard. They have some knowledge about the Church's seasons and were able to share about the colours of each season. This knowledge could be developed further by providing opportunities to help pupils fully understand the purpose of the liturgical year and how this is expressed in the prayer life of English Martyrs. Pupils enjoy praying and could articulate how prayer has helped them outside of school. They can share the core values of love, care, trust and nurture, qualities that are firmly embedded across school. Discussions with pupils demonstrated an understanding about the importance of having faith in their lives and how their faith has led them to action outside of school. One pupil shared that 'praying has given me confidence to deal with things.' Pupils spoke about attending Mass and their ministry as altar servers.

Planned prayer and liturgy are part of routine for pupils, staff and leaders. Special moments are celebrated in prayer by the whole school family. Prayer and liturgy sessions observed demonstrated a variety of ways of praying, including scripture reading, singing, traditional and spontaneous prayer and quiet reflective meditation, which are all reflective of Catholic traditions. Staff are fully committed to supporting pupils when leading prayer and liturgy and have a good understanding of the liturgical norms of the Church. Seasonally appropriate scripture is central to worship, for example, the feeding of the 5000 from Matthew's gospel. Pupils have shown understanding by writing their own version of the diocesan Centenary

Prayer, which is used regularly. Senior leaders lead the weekly faith assembly for all pupils and staff. It is enhanced by opportunities for communal singing of hymns. Scripture is at the heart of everything at English Martyrs and intrinsic links are made between bible passages and prayer themes. This is definitely a strength and could be shared with other partner schools moving forward. All the classrooms have dedicated prayer spaces with seasonally appropriate content and artefacts. An outdoor prayer garden is used for outdoor liturgies and has a calm, prayerful atmosphere. School always invites families to engage with prayer and the assemblies and services held in school are well attended.

Prayer and liturgy is at the heart of daily life at the school, reflecting the central role of Catholic celebration of the Word, in its mission and ethos. The prayer and liturgy policy is purposeful, and staff use this to guide their practice. A progression of skills plan needs to be implemented so that pupils in all age groups show developing ability and confidence in leading prayer and liturgy. Leaders demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring that liturgical celebrations are meaningful and inclusive. The school calendar and daily timetable are carefully planned to incorporate significant events in the liturgical year, including Holy Days of Obligation. Leaders offer regular opportunities for professional development and the subject leader attends diocesan training when required. She has a secure knowledge of Catholic traditions and supports all staff to deepen their understanding of effective and meaningful prayer and liturgy. The subject leader gives constructive feedback to teachers, enabling all staff to develop their skills and knowledge further. External support has been bought in to develop the skills of staff for celebrations of the Word and other prayer practice. Governors recognise the powerful role that prayer and liturgy plays in nurturing a strong sense of community and that worship is a unifying feature of school life and contributes significantly to the school's distinctive Catholic identity.

Information about the school

Full name of school	English Martyrs Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	119605
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	8883639
Full postal address of the school	Sizer Street, Preston, PR1 7DR
School phone number	01772556092
Headteacher	Annalisa Howarth
Chair of Governors	Bernadine Asafo
School Website	www.englishmartyrs.lancs.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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	March 2019
Previous denominational inspection grade	2 - Good

The inspection team

Michelle Holden
Clare Evans

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