

Westminster Diocese Inspection Report

Guardian Angels Catholic Primary School

Whitman Road, Mile End, E3 4RB

Date of inspection: 01 July 2016



A. Classroom Religious Education

What is the overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy?

Overall Grade 2

The overall effectiveness of the religious education in developing the pupils' religious literacy is good. The school offers a creative and varied curriculum, through their scheme of work, which includes effective links with scripture. Children and pupils are encouraged to develop their religious literacy through using a range of religious vocabulary, at times demonstrating the higher levels of learning and understanding. Their progress is now being tracked electronically and from the scrutiny of the work in the books, in portfolios and on display there is evidence of good progress overall, with some examples of excellent progress. The typicality of teaching and its impact on learning is good overall. Pupils and children are consistently engaged and active in their learning. They demonstrate a growing knowledge and understanding of their Catholic faith and its traditions and doctrines. Moderation is shared with the deanery and the diocese and the accurate moderation is supported by the diocesan advisor who is a regular and effective support to the leader in religious education. Self-evaluation is accurate and in particular has effectively identified their priorities for improvement and development. The contribution of the religious education programme to prayer and the Catholic life of the school is evident in the work in the books and from discussions with the pupils. The link governor and the governing body are actively involved supporting the growth of religious education across the school.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What is the overall effectiveness of the Catholic life of the school in developing pupils' experience of the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing?

Overall Grade 1

The Catholic life at Guardian Angels is both vibrant and dynamic with an outstanding range of experiences for pupils to live according to Catholic traditions and teachings. The centrality of religious education and the sacramental, prayer and worship provision is second to none. The religious vocabulary, reverence in prayer, reflection and meditation, which are linked succinctly to the liturgical cycle, includes many examples of how even the youngest pupils and children can explain the theology under-pinning their activities, liturgies and celebrations. The key relationships with the diocese, their local deanery, parents and the parish, are significant and support their full commitment to service and social justice. They empower their children and pupils to develop and flourish, fully utilising their individual gifts and talents. The inclusivity of the school, within this very wide cultural community, where many other faiths are practised, does not in any way deter from the way the school reflects its mission, Catholic identity and their vision of discipleship. The governing body is proactive and the governors have a clear understanding of their strategic role. They are fully involved and keep abreast of diocesan guidance and regulations. The headteacher, supported by her leadership team, is the dynamic driving force of all that make this school so highly effective.

Introduction

The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection. The inspectors spent one day in school, visited seven lessons, four acts of worship, and carried out six interviews with school staff, pupils and governors. Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, discussion with local clergy, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

The Inspection of Guardian Angels Catholic Primary School, Mile End, was carried out under the requirements of the Canon 806 and Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework for Section 48 Inspections approved by the Archbishop of Westminster. The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop. The inspection reviews and evaluates how effective the school is in providing Catholic education. This process begins with the school's own self-evaluation.

Inspection Team

Mrs Tina Cleugh
Mrs Kathleen Sorrell

Lead Inspector
Associate Inspector

Description of School

This Voluntary Aided school is a one form entry in the LA of Tower Hamlets and the locality of Mile End. The school serves the parish of Guardian Angels, Mile End. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 59%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 23% and from other Faiths 18%. The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 72%.

There are 201 pupils on roll, with 52 pupils with statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health & Care Plans (EHCP). The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority groups is well above average. The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above average. There is a well above average rate of families claiming free school meals. 96 pupils receive the Pupil Premium.

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DFE Number: 2112246
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Headteacher: Mrs Elizabeth Worrell-Jude
Chair of Governors: Mr. Paul Nottage

Date of previous inspection: 26 March 2013
Previous Inspection grades: Classroom RE - 3; Catholic life - 2

Key for inspection grades:

<i>Grade 1</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
<i>Grade 2</i>	<i>Good</i>
<i>Grade 3</i>	<i>Requires improvement</i>
<i>Grade 4</i>	<i>Causing Concern</i>

A. Classroom Religious Education

How religiously literate are pupils in the teachings and traditions of the Catholic faith and how well do they know, understand and appreciate the importance of religious faith and practice in everyday life?

What has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection?

The school has addressed all of the identified actions since the previous inspection. The teaching strategies in religious education have been delivered in line with other core areas, such as the use of the 'Talk for Writing' process in the teaching and learning in religious education. A range of resources including ICT and other visual aids and prompts are being planned into the delivery of religious education across the phases. These are at age appropriate levels, whilst setting high expectations in the many cases observed. They have a portfolio of moderated work, which indicates the rates of progress in attainment across the phases and year groups. Regular training is held at the school by the leader for religious education. These events include the sharing and dissemination of information and guidance from the diocesan and deanery networks. The advisor from the diocese has also led training for both teachers and governors, in order to support and improve the confidence of the teachers in the Levels of Attainment in the Agreed Understandings. This has been in an effort to strengthen their subject knowledge and to enable effective links to the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD).

How well does the content of classroom religious education meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory?

Grade 2

The curriculum ensures effective coverage across the areas of learning and is matched to the RECD. There has been investment in a range of resources, including books, tactile and visual resources and there is effective use of a range of ICT. The additional adult support within the classroom teaching of religious education empowers pupils and early years' children to make links within their learning towards attaining at the higher levels of attainment. The leader in religious education has supported planning with staff so that the use of the attainment statements is built into the programme being delivered. This ensures that the pupils are empowered to make links through scripture and to their own daily lives. The school has invested in an electronic tracking system, which they now recognise can be further developed to enable deeper analysis of rates and pace of progress across the phases.

Pupil achievement (as well as attainment and progress) in religious education

Grade 2

The attainment and progress of pupils across the phases are good overall. Teachers are tracking the progress of pupils and children as evident in work in the books, portfolios and the recent inclusion of recording levels of attainment from moderated work, onto the electronic system. The completion of the attainment grids is not yet consistently applied across the phases. Where it is applied, there is clear evidence of how pupils are making progress, including how they respond to the questions raised by the teacher, in moving their learning on. The school has begun the process of internal monitoring and tracking, which now needs to be analysed in order to identify pupils and children who could be further challenged to reach the higher levels of attainment in religious education. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain in line with other core subjects. In discussions with inspectors, pupils spoke of how they value the support received from their teachers including feedback on how to improve their learning. Pupils spoke of how they 'enjoyed their learning in religious education' and how they 'value it as an important subject in a Catholic school.' However, not all pupils across the key stages were able to articulate what they needed to focus on to improve their learning. The scrutiny of the work in the books shows the pride pupils have in their learning in religious education,

though this was inconsistent in different classes across Key Stages 1 and 2. The headteacher shows a determination to drive the standards to the higher levels of attainment across the phases and is working closely with the diocesan advisor and the leader of religious education to implement systems and structures for analysing the recorded progress.

The quality of teaching

Grade 2

The overall effectiveness of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning in religious education is good. The teachers have developed their planning in religious education, in a collaborative way. They have cross phase opportunities to plan together and to increase their subject knowledge and understanding of the theology underpinning the topics being delivered. They have benefited from a range of support from the diocesan advisor and the guidance disseminated by the leader in religious education following deanery network sessions and diocesan training. The observations of the teaching demonstrated how the well planned, probing questioning at times allowed the pupils and children to deepen their thinking and make effective links. This included the effective use and reference to scripture. An example of this was how the children explored the importance in the parable of Zacchaeus and how he was prepared to 'change his ways and make amends.' One of the children described how, '... God knows and loves each one of us... if we are feeling sorry for what we have done, God and Jesus will forgive us.' These youngest children are being encouraged to explore the feelings of people who are 'left out.' Pupils demonstrate exemplary behaviour in their learning across the school. They described how they enjoy the range of teaching strategies in religious education, such as 'drama, role play and our creative writing of prayers and poems.' Pupils are active, yet reflective learners, whose prior knowledge and understanding is evident in the way they relate their learning and religious literacy to their everyday lives and experience. Teachers are skilful in their questioning, facilitating learning conversations, whilst scaffolding the questions and tasks for less able children and pupils. The provision for pupils and children identified with special education needs is significant in how they are empowered through, for example, re-teaching key concepts. The use of 'talking partners', praise and encouragement are drawing out their different levels of learning and understanding. The use of the working walls, story maps and cloze procedures in the teaching of religious education enables pupils to recap on their earlier learning, whilst being challenged to make effective links to living 'a good Catholic life.' The references to the Holy Year of Mercy allowed pupils to explore the 'virtue of mercy,' through the lives and the courage of the saints, such as for example, St. Damien of Molokai and St. Vincent de Paul.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade 2

The overall effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education is good. The school has a commitment to the educational mission of the Church. Religious education influences all aspects of the daily life of the school. The headteacher works hard to ensure that the leader of religious education monitors the quality of the programme delivered in religious education and its impact on the learning of the pupils across the phases. She ensures that the staff are fully supported, encouraged and guided to develop their subject knowledge and skills, with a range of in-service and high quality resources. The staff are also supported in their planning, through the school's regular scheduled training and the dissemination of updated guidance and information from the diocese by the leader of religious education. The leader has been supported by the diocesan advisor in the planning and assessment of the scheme of work and how it relates to the levels of attainment in religious education. This also included the advisor supporting the chair of governors through the school's teaching scheme of work in religious education and its links to the Curriculum Directory. The school's self-evaluation demonstrated an accurate assessment of the strengths and identified areas for development, which are being addressed. The headteacher works exceptionally hard to ensure that good quality religious education is provided for all.

What should the school do to develop further in classroom religious education?

- Ensure consistency in developmental marking in religious education including challenging the more able to demonstrate the higher levels of attainment
- Further develop the recent electronic tracking to analyse the pace of progress across the phases for all pupils, particularly the more able
- Pupils to be aware of their targets in religious education, especially how to improve their learning, especially for the higher levels of attainment

B. The Catholic life of the school

How well do pupils experience the richness of a Catholic way of living and believing through all areas of school life?

What has improved since the last inspection?

Pupils are actively engaged in preparing and leading class worship. They are using the diocesan model even for the youngest pupils. They are empowered to pray spontaneously and know the traditional prayers and responses at age appropriate levels. The mission statement has been reviewed and is highly visual in classes, public areas and referred to in lesson and school policies. It is also referred to during assemblies. The governor who met the inspectors explained how every governor has a designated class for which they are responsible, in reporting back the progress of identified priorities, to the governing body. They also try to attend the class worship, assemblies and special celebrations as well as getting to know the staff and children. The school has dedicated many parts of the public areas to the Year of Mercy, including their 'Door of Mercy'; there are very high quality displays, demonstrating how the pupils and children are fully aware and understand the 'virtues of mercy.'

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum – time, staffing, accommodation, resources, budget

Grade I

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum is outstanding. The school building is secure, clean, tidy and bright, including the highly stimulating outdoor learning areas for the younger pupils. The governing body has invested generously in ensuring that the resources effectively support the learning for the pupils in religious education and in their faith journey. The high quality range of resources includes artefacts, Bibles, and excellent ICT resources which enhance the learning and creativity across the phases. The headteacher is fully committed to ensuring effective staffing ratios to maximise the learning opportunities for all pupils and children. This also has an excellent impact on supporting the learning of pupils with additional and some with significant additional needs in their religious education and spiritual development.

The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community

Grade I

The whole school benefits from outstanding provision for prayer, worship and liturgy across the triple partnership of home, school and parish. Worship and prayer are central to the daily life for the staff and pupils. The Catholic tradition, celebration of the liturgical cycle and special holy days are true reflections of the way in which the school empowers pupils to plan and lead worship. Their 'Book of Guardian Angel's Traditional Prayers' encourages all the pupils to relate their prayers to their everyday lives and experiences. Daily acts of worship include the breadth and richness of traditional prayers and relevant scripture readings and themes, at age appropriate levels. Pupils and younger children demonstrate a mature and confident approach to their prayer, reflections and reverence. They are actively engaged in the preparation, planning and delivery of their class acts of worship. They have many excellent opportunities to sit in stillness and meditate, to develop their personal relationship to God. The effective use of scripture is evident in their links to the learning in their books and the very high quality of the class and public child-centred displays. The creative strategies applied both in the class teaching and in their range of assemblies, include drama, role play, art and music. Parents are invited to attend the assemblies, special celebrations and Masses. The pupils from Year 3 upwards have the opportunity for class Mass regularly. The very close proximity of the church to the school is a powerful and well used resource in supporting their growing

spirituality, including opportunities to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. The parish priest is a regular and welcome visitor to the school, supporting teachers in their understanding of Church traditions and doctrines. Parents speak warmly and with great appreciation of the way the school supports their children's prayer life and spiritual development, such as how '...religious education is the heart and soul of the school...teachers understand what prayer is about...' The pupils and children of other faiths fully participate in the religious education programmes and the Catholic life of the school. Staff new to the school and those of other faiths are fully supported and guided through the spiritual development programmes. The school participates in the Diocese of Westminster celebrations, such as the Good Shepherd Mass. The school truly understands itself as a Catholic worshipping community.

The commitment and contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice

Grade I

The school has excellent commitment and contribution to the Common Good, which includes the school's outstanding range of service and dedication to social justice. The school actively empowers pupils and children to thrive, whilst developing their individual skills. Staff, parents and pupils show respect, tolerance and nurture to and for each other. The pupils who met the inspectors were excellent examples of the way in which the school enables their gifts and talents to flourish. They were articulate, confident and very proud of their school. They plan and carry out a wide range of fundraising for a variety of charities, including the Richard House Children's Hospice, Cafod, the Catholic Children's Society and St. Joseph's Hospice. They know and understand the importance of the message of Jesus, 'to love your neighbour as yourself.' They apply this on a daily basis and spoke enthusiastically of how they use their 'corporal virtues,' to influence their corporal acts of mercy in a practical way, during this Holy Year of Mercy, through a range of activities supporting those in need locally, nationally and globally. The behaviour and attitudes of the pupils from Reception to Year 6 are exemplary, both in class and in the daily routines throughout the school. They are actively encouraged to have ownership and independence through the range of partnership of home, school and within the parish and local community. They come from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds, respecting and valuing their differences and individual gifts. The theological underpinning, from their active contributions and service to others, is evident and is a real strength of how the school empowers their 'human flourishing.'

Enabling the authentic partnership between parents, school and parish as an integral part of the Diocese, particularly through its relationship with the Diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf

Grade I

The very welcoming and nurturing ethos of this Catholic school, demonstrates an outstanding partnership between the school, the parents, the parish and the diocese. Parents are an integral part of the service provided by the school. The high quality range of workshops in their special 'Claire Fielding Room', dedicated to one of the Victorian founders of the school, includes information leaflets, guidance led by their dedicated Home School Parents Support Worker. She manages the substantial and wide ranging initiatives and out-reach programmes. The social worker, who is employed by the school, supports families with a range of difficulties, including housing and social challenges. The school declares its duty to develop these parent partnerships to '... nurture the whole child so that they can become true followers of Christ'. The school has a wide network of other local schools and deanery groups and are also fully involved in the range of diocesan programmes, networks and training. The governing body is pro-active and plans regular scheduled visits to the school, covering a range of roles and responsibilities. During the inspection, the chair of governors praised the headteacher and her energetic and sheer dedication when he and other governors visit the school and attend special events, it is ...'a joy to behold...how the children are

developing...’ The inclusivity of the school is a hallmark of the way they welcome and nurture new families, fostering excellent relationships, whilst ensuring that all in the community are valued and empowered to grow.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school

Grade 1

The dynamic leadership of the headteacher is the most significant reason why the Catholic life and spiritual development of the pupils is outstanding. She ensures that the school’s leadership is fully committed to the Church’s mission and vision for improving the Catholic life and the education of all in the community. Her leadership team is driven by faith and the mission statement as a living document. The termly schedule of training includes re-visiting of the religious education programmes and the prayer and worship cycle which are central to the school development programme. Induction support for new staff and those of other faiths, is a key area identified by the school ensuring the provision for the pupils is sustained at a high level. Recruitment difficulties and succession planning are constantly addressed by the headteacher, and the governing body. Targets set for staff have the overarching emphasis on securing the Catholic life of the school. The governing body are pro-active and regular visitors, with excellent commitment to the school and its developments. They are kept fully informed by the headteacher and the support from the diocesan advisor is much appreciated by the governing body. They continue to work in close partnership with the diocese, on all matters related to their governance and with the headteacher, they continue to live by their mission statement where, ‘God is at the centre of all we do and that everything relates to God.’ In this way, the leadership team and the governing body of the school, ably supported and guided by the headteacher, ensure that through their Catholic mission and vision, the school ‘strives to sustain their excellent practice for all.’

What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?

- Further enhance the partnership and active involvement between the parish and those families not resident in the parish
- Continue to affirm the sense of community with those children and their families who are not Catholic and those of other faiths