



Diocese of Westminster

Guardian Angels Catholic Primary School
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DFE Number: 211 3346
URN Number: 100945

Headteacher: Mrs E. Worrell-Jude

Chair of Governors: Mr. P. Nottage

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Archbishop of Westminster
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 26th March 2013
Date of previous inspection: February 2010

Reporting Inspector: Mrs M. Betts
Associate Inspector: Mrs. Kathleen Gilbert

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 7 lessons and one assembly, and carried out 5 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, Tower Hamlets was carried out under the requirements of the Education Act 2005, and in accordance with the Framework and Schedule 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.

Description of School

The school is a one form entry in the LA of Tower Hamlets and the locality of Bow. The school serves the parish of Guardian Angels, Bow. The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 52%. The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 38% and from other Faiths 10%.

There are 206 pupils on roll, with 2 pupils with statements of Special Educational Need. 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 higher than average rate of families claiming free school meals.

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1: Outstanding;*

Grade 1: Very Good;

Grade 2: Good;

Grade 3: Requires improvement;

Grade 4: Causing Concern.

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

Overall Grade: [3]

The overall effectiveness of classroom religious education in developing pupils' religious literacy requires improvement. The school leadership is aware of the areas needed for improvement and is involved in working to improve the teachers' skills and so raise teaching standards to at least good in every class. Three out of seven classroom teachers are newly qualified. All staff are committed to improving their skills. Pupils at Guardian Angels school have positive attitudes to religious education learning. The older pupils enjoy their religious education lessons especially when they are given creative and cross-curricular learning tasks such as researching on the internet and drama. Pupils are becoming aware of how faith affects their daily living. One pupil describing the impact RE learning has on his life said "it helps us to know and do the right actions".

What has improved in classroom religious education since the last inspection and what should the school do to further improve in classroom religious education?

The school has made some progress on the key areas identified in the previous report. The quality of written work is now good and the curriculum is being fully covered. Monitoring of RE has improved. Marking has been developed but there are still inconsistencies of approach across the classes. Recent evidence shows that assessment data is now linked to national attainment targets.

To further improve in curriculum religious education the school has identified the following areas for development and the inspector concurs with these:

Ensure teachers' planning especially for younger pupils includes age appropriate teacher delivery and motivating creative and practical tasks so that all pupils are challenged at the correct ability level to achieve maximum learning.

Rigorously monitor RE lessons to ensure that teaching and learning is consistently good in all classes.

Continue to develop assessment to enable the school to track pupil progress and use this assessment knowledge in future planning.

Moderate assessment outcomes recording the criteria used so ensuring consistency of judgements throughout the school.

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

Grade [3]

The Curriculum Directory forms the basis for planning the content for religious education lessons. Since September the school is using "The Year of Faith" units for their RE curriculum and these reference the curriculum directory age related objectives for the four areas of study. The school has mapped these to each topic and will ensure their full coverage throughout the year. In just over half of the lessons observed planning illustrated a good attempt to make RE learning and the resources relevant to the ages and abilities of the pupils. This was evidenced by the very youngest children

being provided with play and art materials to create a cross design after hearing the Good Friday story. However in some year groups planning and resources chosen need to be more closely related to the needs and abilities of the pupils to motivate learning. RE books show a satisfactory coverage of the curriculum but in many classes tasks lack a good variety of written outcomes.

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

Grade [3]

Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious literacy, the work they produce and assessment data collected during the last six months evidence that most pupils are making satisfactory progress in religious education. Their behaviour in lessons is good and pupils are eager to do their best even when the delivery is not related appropriately to their ages and abilities. Some pupils are developing a sound knowledge of Scripture as illustrated when a pupil in year 3 was able to name the gospel, chapter and verse of a particular quote. Older children are challenged well, for example Year 6 pupils were comparing the Passion of our Lord and its traditions in four different periods of history. The older pupils are aware of attainment levels linked to their assessment tasks and of what they need to do to achieve a higher level. RE books are well-cared for and well-presented.

The quality of teaching

Grade [3]

The quality of teaching over time is inconsistent throughout the school and requires improvement. The lessons observed ranged in quality from unsatisfactory to good with very good features. The headteacher's judgements of the teaching observed concurred with the inspectors'. When teaching was best, teachers had planned age-appropriate delivery of the learning objective which motivated pupils to achieve by the effective use of creative and interesting tasks to consolidate the learning. This was seen in a Year 5 class where pupils were engaged well when comparing Luke's gospel account of Jesus' journey to and at the cross, with the traditional Stations of the Cross. Where teaching was of a lower standard the lessons planned, the work in pupils' books and talking with pupils did not evidence that pupils were interested or excited by their RE learning. Assessments linked to National Attainment Targets are now undertaken for each topic and data will be collected in order to track the progress of pupils. The quality of marking is inconsistent across the school with the best marking extending the pupils' learning and opportunities being given for pupils to make these improvements.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education

Grade [3]

Overall the leadership of religious education requires improvement. The school leadership team are supporting teachers to improve their teaching but too many are not yet delivering good RE lessons. The subject co-ordinator works hard to keep up to date with diocesan and deanery initiatives which she disseminates to the teachers. She guides and supports staff well. The majority of issues from the last inspection have not yet been fully completed. Four teachers hold the CCRS (Catholic Certificate of Religious Studies). Books are monitored regularly and improvement comments communicated to the teachers. RE lesson observations have taken place recently but there is no evidence that these have resulted in teaching improvements. The governors are planning to scrutinise RE data as thoroughly as they do for other core subjects. The parish priest, as RE governor, is kept regularly informed of the RE curriculum. He often offers guidance to staff relating to RE subject knowledge. The church is used as a resource for RE learning as exemplified by the use made recently of the church's Stations of the Cross.

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 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: [2]

Guardian Angels is a good Catholic school and provides pupils well with knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. Prayer and worship have a central role in school life and pupils experience the richness of the traditions of the Catholic faith throughout the liturgical year. The school promotes pupils' spiritual and moral development well and this is reflected in their good behaviour, positive attitudes and their respect for each other and adults. Pupils are proud of their school and say "we learn here how to get on together". The school's mission statement underpins the life of the school and although very wordy, the pupils understand the values behind it. The dedicated leadership of the headteacher, senior leadership team and governors is instrumental in effectively maintaining the school's Catholic identity.

What has improved since the last inspection and what should the school do to further develop the Catholic life of the school ?

There were no Catholic life key issues from the last inspection. Since then the school has built an improved hall space with attractive displays to support the experience of delivery of collective worship.

To further improve Catholic life the school has identified the following areas for development and the inspector concurs with these:

To review the mission statement and devise a concise child-friendly summary statement to underpin the whole school Catholic identity.

To raise the profile of the governors' involvement by regular governor evaluations of a variety of aspects relating to the Catholic life of the school and religious education.

To increase the opportunities for pupils to be more actively involved in preparing and leading classroom worship.

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

Grade [3]

RE lessons receive 10% of curriculum time and equivalent funding to other core subjects. More rigorous monitoring by the senior leadership team of RE teaching and learning is needed to raise the profile of this subject throughout the whole school. Pupils are aware that what they learn in RE impacts their everyday actions and develops their knowledge of the faith. Governors are supportive of religious education and some have attended a diocesan course related to using Scripture more productively in this subject.

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

Grade [2]

The school promotes prayer well, worship, daily recitation of the Angelus and sacramental celebrations. These strong features effectively underpin school life. Pupils know prayer as an important aspect of their lives as Catholics and sometimes compose their own prayers as part of their RE learning. Pupils' liturgical formation is well planned to ensure the widest possible experience of the richness of the Catholic tradition of liturgy and worship, and reflects well the Church's year. For example, the Passion of our Lord is being re-enacted with the involvement of every class presenting some aspect, to the rest of the school. Mass is celebrated regularly with a different Key Stage 2 class leading the parish Mass each week. Opportunities for Reconciliation are provided during Advent, Lent and in the summer term for Year 6. Pupils are respectful during worship and participate with sincerity. They are given opportunities to reflect on the worship theme and how they can put this into practice in their own lives. The pupils' enthusiastic and lively singing enriches worship. Pupils help to present assemblies and liturgies but rarely have the opportunity to plan their own class act of worship.

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

Grade [2]

The pupils have a good understanding of the importance of supporting those in need and are involved in the fund-raising activities, for example, organising cake sales. Older pupils related this service to being like Jesus and following His ways. At present there are no opportunities given for pupils to undertake practical community service in the locality although they support well the local hospice. Pupils enthusiastically undertake responsibilities, one of these being as "Play Leaders". The diversity of cultures within the school is celebrated during international week when families offer contributions to the varied activities that take place. Families are supported by a home school worker. Pupils appreciate the friendliness of staff who listen to them and help with problems.

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 [2]

The school has positive relationships with parents who are supportive, evidenced by the number of parents (80%) agreeing and strongly agreeing with all aspects of the school's RE and Catholic provision. Parents are invited to pupil-led assemblies and celebrations. The parish priest and a parishioner both offer regular opportunities for parents to discuss their own faith in small group sessions. The school works in partnership with the Diocese and accesses teacher and governor training. There are links with the other Catholic schools in the deanery and at present they are planning together the Year of Faith units for the teaching of religious education. Close links exist with the local parish.

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

Grade [2]

The school leaders and the RE co-ordinator are strongly committed to the Church's mission in education. The completed self-evaluation provides evidence of good awareness of the strengths of the Catholic life of the school and the headteacher has a clear knowledge of the improvements to be made. The Catholic dimension of the school is evidenced by the many high quality and attractive displays and artefacts. Governors are supportive. This is seen particularly through the work of the parish priest who is involved in parents' induction visits and parent faith formation groups, and, through his class visits, promotes pupils' further understanding of the sacraments.



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A. Classroom Religious Education

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Overall Grade [3]

How well does the content of classroom religious education meet the requirements of the Curriculum Directory?	Grade [3]
Pupil achievement (as well as attainment and progress) in religious education	Grade [3]
The quality of teaching	Grade [3]
The effectiveness of the leadership and management of religious education	Grade [3]

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 [2]

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum – time, staffing, accommodation, resources, budget	Grade [3]
The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community	Grade [2]
The commitment and contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice.	Grade [2]
The 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 [2]
The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school.	Grade [2]