



Archdiocese of Birmingham

Section 48 Inspection Report

GUARDIAN ANGELS CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hurst Lane, Birmingham, B34 7HN

Inspection dates:

31st January – 1st February 2019

Lead Inspector:

Maureen O'Leary

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS:

Good

Catholic Life:

Good

Religious Education:

Good

Collective Worship:

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection:

Outstanding

SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS FOR PARENTS AND PUPILS

This is a Good Catholic school because:

- The newly appointed headteacher provides exceptional leadership of the Catholic Life of the school. She inspires the whole community to live out the school's mission. As a result, all of the staff and governors are deeply committed to improving the Catholic Life of the school.
- The development of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship is given the highest priority by the school's leaders. It is at the forefront of all development, including the school improvement plan and staff performance management.
- The commitment of the parish priest and the headteacher ensure that the school and parish work very well together for the benefit of all.
- Pupils enter the school with a very limited knowledge in Religious Education but quickly make good progress. Consistently effective teaching means that pupils leave the school with a sound understanding of the Catholic Faith. They understand how their learning influences the way they should live their lives.
- The entire life of the school is built on a secure foundation of prayer. This allows pupils, staff and parents to experience increasingly meaningful Collective Worship.

It is not yet Outstanding because:

- The whole curriculum and life of the school needs to fully reflect its Catholic mission.
- Religious Education teaching does not sufficiently challenge more able pupils.
- Additional adults are not sufficiently active in supporting pupils' learning in Religious Education.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to initiate and plan Collective Worship.

FULL REPORT

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed current initiatives, such as the Catholic School's Pupil Profile (CSPP) and the UNICEF Right Respecting Schools, into the whole curriculum and life of the school.
- Improve teachers' subject knowledge in Religious Education. This will help them to deepen pupils' learning through questioning and to make accurate assessment judgements.
- Provide training and guidance for additional adults about how they can support pupils' learning in Religious Education.
- Increase the skills of staff further to plan and lead meaningful spiritual experiences through prayer. Use these skills to support all pupils to plan and initiate Collective Worship.

THE CATHOLIC LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

The quality of the Catholic Life of the school.	Good
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.	Good
The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.	Outstanding

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school.

The quality of provision for the Catholic Life of the school.

- Leaders have taken very effective action to make sure that the school mission statement is known by the whole community. It is highly visible around the building, on the website and in the weekly newsletter. Actions while saying the mission statement, provided by the pupil led liturgy leaders, have helped even the youngest children to understand what it means. "Guided by the teachings of the Church we pray, work, celebrate, and care for each other and other people using the gifts we have been given by God the Father, Son and Spirit."
- The environment is a vibrant reminder of the Catholic Life of the school. A huge variety of displays celebrate and promote the pupils' leadership, charitable outreach, the CSPP, prayer and the lives of the saints. Areas in each class and key stage corridor allow pupils to stop and pray at any time during the day. The pupil liturgy leaders often monitor the environment and give an award for the best prayer space in each class.
- Staff are deeply committed to providing the very best education for each pupil. They are keen to improve Catholic Life to support this education. This is a key strength of the school.
- Staff are excellent role models to pupils, teaching them how to behave and treat each other with respect and care. Consequently, pupils were able to explain to inspectors that their school helps them to, "Believe in Jesus and have faith", to be, "Kind, respectful and helpful," and to, "Follow God's path."
- Both in class and around the school, pupils are polite and caring to others. For example, they are quick to greet visitors with a smile and to help anyone on the

playground who is lonely or upset. During the inspection, pupils were often seen gently supporting pupils with SEND.

- There are a number of groups in the school that allow pupils to lead Catholic Life. For example, the school council, liturgy leaders, the eco team and UNICEF ambassadors have improved school dinners, recycling of paper and plastic and the understanding of children's rights. Through these groups, pupils feel happy that the adults in the school ask for their opinions and act on their ideas.
- The pupils in the school are concerned about the welfare of others and take action to improve the lives of people in their local community and across the world. Pupils regularly entertain elderly parishioners in the school hall with afternoon tea and their company. In addition, they support and visit the local community kitchen. Throughout the year, the school raises funds for many charities such as Cafod, Rainbow Trust and the local foodbank.
- Links between the school and the parish are continually growing. Pupils are invited to monthly parish family Masses and those pupils who attend often volunteer to act as altar servers, collectors or offertory bearers. The weekly visit of the parish priest to the school, not only to say Mass but also to visit each class, is highly valued by pupils. They welcome his concern for each one of them and his support with their learning in Religious Education, traditional prayers and their 'I Wonder' questions.
- The member of staff responsible for the pastoral care of pupils has provided compassionate and valuable support for pupils and their families. As part of this support, there are offers of spiritual support through prayer. This provision contributes significantly to the Catholic Life of the school.
- The school's current creative curriculum includes elements that support Catholic Life. As this curriculum develops, there is an opportunity to include links to the CSPP and a greater awareness of other faiths and religions.
- Pupils are taught about relationships and sex education (RSE) through Religious Education, PHSE and the All That I Am programme. The school has a recently revised policy and the Religious Education subject leader has conducted an audit of RSE. The findings from this audit should now be used by senior leaders and governors to review provision.
- Pupils, especially those in key stage 2, have a good understanding of vocation. The use of thought-provoking displays, links to enabling enterprise (which include visits to places of work), interviews with the headteacher and the parish priest have all supported this understanding. One pupil explained his view of vocation where, "God has made a path for everyone."

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision of the Catholic Life of the school.

- The headteacher provides an excellent model of servant leadership that is respected by all. Her sincerity and faith have ensured that the promotion of the Catholic Life of the school is seen as a priority by staff and governors.
- The establishment of an inclusive and enthusiastic Catholic Life team has led to effective monitoring and evaluation. Their self-evaluation is highly accurate and has led to rapid improvements, especially in the development of the school environment. For example, the class prayer areas have been improved and now provide a highly visible spiritual focus.
- The Religious Education subject leader and the senior leaders have provided excellent support to staff new to the school. As a result, all staff have a clear understanding of the mission of the school and are eager to support it.
- Senior leaders listen to the views of parents and have responded to their request for better communication. As a result, communication between the school and the

home is strong. Parents feel welcome at the school and are kept up to date with school events that they can attend. They value the Wednesday Word and the school prayer bags, which they like to share with their children. They feel very confident in the headteacher's leadership of the Catholic Life of the school and the impact that this has on their children.

- Governors are kept well informed about the standards of Catholic Life through headteacher's reports, the link governor's and parish priest's visits to the school and through the school newsletter. The recent appointment of a new link governor should enable a greater active involvement in the evaluation of standards.
- Leaders and governors regularly attend diocesan training, such as headteacher & deputy headteacher induction, diocesan briefings and section 48 training. As a result, they are well informed to actively promote its policies and initiatives. They have taken effective action to meet all the recommendations for previous diocesan inspections and monitoring visits.
- The school leaders' collaboration with other schools in the diocese, who have outstanding practice, has supported their ambitious aspirations for the Catholic Life of Guardian Angels.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The quality of Religious Education.	Good
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education.	Good
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.	Good

How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in Religious Education. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in Religious Education.

- Teachers plan Religious Education lessons for pupils that are engaging and varied. For example, pupils are able to learn through drama, art, writing and the use of thinking skills. However, the monitoring of these tasks should ensure that they are not only "fun" but also help pupils to learn.
- Most pupils, especially in key stage 2, take pride in their work and see their workbooks as special because they are about God. Almost all pupils value and enjoy their lessons.
- Teachers regularly set tasks and ask questions, both in class and through their marking, that require pupils to consider how their learning impacts on their lives. As a result, nearly all pupils can explain how their learning influences their thinking and behaviours.
- Although pupils enter the school with little or no knowledge about Religious Education, they quickly make progress. The introduction of Godly Play in Reception class has helped most pupils to understand key ideas in a simple and engaging way. This new initiative needs to be embedded and used to stimulate pupils' learning after direct teaching time.
- As pupils move through the school, they are able to engage in deeper reflections through longer pieces of writing. This writing often involves them putting themselves in the place of characters from the Bible, which they enjoy.

- Teachers regularly assess pupils' attainment and are aware of pupils' prior attainment. However, these assessments can occasionally be based on pupils' literacy skills rather than on their knowledge and skills in Religious Education.
- Most pupils make good progress in Religious Education and teachers are aware of individuals and groups of pupils that are underachieving. The focus on supporting pupils with SEND has led to their improved progress.
- Class teachers have a growing subject knowledge, which supports pupils' learning well. However, this knowledge needs to develop further to support more able pupils at a greater depth.
- Although teachers and additional adults support pupils when necessary, tasks and questioning are not regularly adapted to suit the needs of different pupils. As a result, more able pupils are sometimes not challenged enough by adults.
- Pupils are encouraged, through the use of target sheets, unit markers and self-assessment of success criteria, to evaluate their work. The target sheets, in key stage 2 in particular, help them to know their next steps in learning.
- Displays in every class and in communal areas help to celebrate pupils' achievements in Religious Education and support their learning. For example, beautifully painted self-portraits in Year 1 remind us, "We are all part of God's family", whereas the role play church in Reception is used by children to act out "Bobbie's" baptism at the font.
- Pupils understanding of Religious Education is supported by fortnightly homework tasks. These are often creative and engaging tasks, which not only improve pupils' knowledge and understanding but also supports their parents and carers knowledge and understanding too.
- The school provides a number of opportunities for pupils to have an awareness of other faiths and religions. This teaching has helped pupils to have a sense of respect for those who have beliefs that are different from their own. However, pupils' knowledge of specific world faiths would benefit from further development, including visits to places of worship.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education.

- The committed and skilled Religious Education subject leader's monitoring and evaluation has enabled her to quickly identify areas for improvement. Supported by senior leaders this has led to well targeted actions. As a result, improvements have been made to the presentation of pupils' work, the support of pupils with SEND and the choice of tasks in early years.
- The subject leader has analysed assessment data accurately and shared this information with teachers, senior leaders and governors. This detailed analysis currently takes place annually. The subject leader is now planning to use this information at termly pupil progress meetings. This would help to, more regularly, identify pupils who require greater support or challenge.
- Staff have been well supported by the subject leader, who provides termly training for the whole staff, as well as support for individual teachers. As a result, staff, especially those who are relatively new to teaching, are willing and able to improve their practice.
- The subject leader's action plan for Religious Education is suitably focused, highly practical and clearly supports improvement. The inclusion of targets for improvement for Catholic Life and Collective Worship has ensured that improvements across these three areas are complimentary and manageable.
- The standards in Religious Education are shared with governors through the termly headteacher's report, the link governor's visits and reports, as well as the annual

subject leader's report. Governors are aware of the strengths and any areas for development. However, they need to have a greater understanding of the impact of any strategies that are introduced to improve areas of concern.

- Leaders have ensured that Religious Education meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference, including its provision for a minimum of 10% of the curriculum and that it is comparable to other core subjects.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The quality of Collective Worship.	Good
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship.	Good
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.	Good
How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.	Good

How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship. The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school.

- Prayer is a fundamental part of every day and at each key school event. It is welcomed and valued by the whole community.
- Adults model excellent attitudes to prayer, through their enthusiastic participation and encouragement of pupils. As a result, almost all pupils take part in Collective Worship with reverence and respect.
- Pupils experience a range of prayer opportunities both in class and as a whole school. This helps them to experience prayer in a variety of ways. For example, during the inspection, pupils were able to reflect in silence, sing joyfully and pray the traditional prayers of the Church.
- Collective Worship provides thought provoking themes that reflect the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. During the inspection, the Collective Worship led by the headteacher focused on the feast of Candlemas and phase assemblies, led by phase leaders, helped pupils to think about their own mission. Pupils left these services uplifted by prayer and with a clear message and challenge.
- Pupils are increasingly being given opportunities to plan and lead Collective Worship. In particular, the liturgy leaders in each class are becoming skilful at planning class Collective Worship. These leaders, from Reception class upwards, are growing in confidence as they use diocesan planning resources, supported by their class teachers. They also take great pride in setting up their class prayer areas.
- Classes take it in turns to prepare school Masses. Encouraged by the parish priest, they prepare and read the Liturgy of the Word, write the bidding prayers, take up the offertory, choose the hymns and act as altar servers. Following a school Mass, all pupils reflect on their participation and the meaning of the homily.
- Older pupils provide excellent support to adults in delivering whole school Collective Worship. Their responsibilities include technical support, preparation of the prayer focus and setting out the seating.
- Staff have worked hard to support pupils as they learn the traditional prayers of the Church. These are regularly used in class and whole school Collective Worship. The older pupils in Year 6 also act as prayer partners to Reception class. They are vigilant in helping them to know the sign of the cross and the Our Father.

- Parents, carers and parishioners are welcome to attend weekly Mass and key celebrations in the school and Church. Improved communication has meant that parents and carers feel better informed about the timings of these events.

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for Collective Worship.

- Leaders have planned Collective Worship well so that it clearly reflects the Church's liturgical year, seasons and feasts. This planning is supported by the effective work of members of the Catholic Life team and the parish priest.
- The headteacher provides an excellent model of how to plan and deliver Collective Worship to pupils. She ensures that pupils have the opportunity to participate, reflect spiritually and take with them a clear message of faith in action. Her example supports and guides other staff in their leadership of worship.
- Staff have received training, focused on Collective Worship, that has improved their skills and knowledge. They have used this training to plan Collective Worship and to support pupils in leading times of prayer. Consequently, staff are increasingly leading prayerful experiences that are meaningful to pupils.
- Currently, the headteacher and deputy headteacher lead staff in prayer at briefings and provide the opportunity for an extended prayer time each week. This voluntary prayer time is very well attended by staff.
- Staff have benefitted from attendance at annual staff retreats, at such places as St Mary's Convent, Handsworth. The spiritual formation of adults working at the school is valued and clearly supports them on their own faith journeys.
- Leaders of the Catholic Life team strategically plan the monitoring of Collective Worship. They seek the opinions of pupils, staff, governors, parents and carers. The evaluation of monitoring has led to improvements in the prayer life of the community. For example, the use of prayer bags and prayer bears have supported pupils' experience of prayer both at school and at home.

SCHOOL DETAILS

Unique reference number	103402
Local authority	Birmingham
<i>This inspection was carried out under canon 806 of Canon Law and under Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act.</i>	
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range	4-11 years
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	237
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mary Higgins
Headteacher	Helen Milligan
Telephone number	0121 747 2782
Website address	http://www.grdangel.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@grdangel.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 th March 2014

INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SCHOOL

- The school serves the parish of Mother of God and Guardian Angels. It is situated in Shard End, Birmingham in an area of high deprivation.
- The percentage of Catholic pupils is currently 67%.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is significantly above the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic origins is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is below the national average.
- Attainment on entry is below age-related expectations.
- Since the last inspection the school has undergone considerable change. There has been a newly appointed headteacher, chair of governors and parish priest. A large number of governors and staff have also been appointed.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION

- The inspection was carried out by two Diocesan Inspectors – Maureen O’Leary and Louise Bury.
- The focus of the inspection was on the impact, quality and leadership of the school’s provision of Catholic Life, Religious Education and Collective Worship.
- The inspectors observed teaching across seven Religious Education lessons to evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Some of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspectors completed a work scrutiny and held discussions with pupils to evaluate their understanding of Catholic Life, the impact of Religious Education teaching on their learning over time and their experience of Collective Worship.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the Religious Education subject leader, the parish priest and a group of governors, including the chair of governors & the Catholic Life link governor.
- The inspectors attended whole school and phase Collective Worship and undertook a learning walk to look at aspects of learning and teaching in Religious Education, the presentation of the Catholic Life of the school and pupils’ behaviour. The inspectors spoke with parents & carers at the beginning and end of the school day and with pupils during lunchtime.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documents including the school’s self-evaluation, data about pupils’ attainment and progress, Analyse School Performance (ASP) data, the school improvement plan, the Religious Education action plan, teachers’ planning and learning journals.