

# Guardian Angels RC Primary School, Bury

Leigh Lane, Elton, Bury, Lancashire, BL8 2RH

**Inspection dates** 15–16 January 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>1</b>
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an outstanding school.

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, strongly supported by staff and governors, has successfully driven the school even further forward since the previous inspection.
- Governors are highly effective and fully involved in all aspects of the school’s work. They demonstrate excellent knowledge of the school, which enables them to hold school leaders thoroughly to account.
- The curriculum is enriched with memorable experiences and is successfully planned to support pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- Pupils’ attitudes toward learning are exemplary. They are confident learners who regularly produce high quality work.
- Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is excellent. Pupils are highly respectful toward adults and each other.
- Pupils say that they feel very safe and well cared for in school.
- The quality of teaching is excellent. The expectations of the staff are evident in the high standards of work produced by pupils.
- Strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants usually guarantees a high level of support for pupils with additional needs. However, the small numbers of pupils who find matching letters and sounds challenging are not always given enough support.
- By the end of Year 6 attainment is well above average and, from their individual starting points, pupils achieve exceptionally well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Excellent leadership of the early years department has resulted in outstanding teaching, and children being very well prepared to join Key Stage 1.
- Strong relationships with parents are forged when children join the early years and parents remain highly supportive of the school.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes taught by teachers and in activities led by teaching assistants and a specialist teacher. One lesson was observed jointly with the headteacher and a learning walk around the school also took place.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils and observed and spoke to pupils during lessons, playtimes and at lunchtime. They also listened to pupils reading.
- Meetings were held with staff, senior leaders and managers, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors met formally with a group of parents and informally with parents as they dropped off their children at school. In addition, one parent spoke to an inspector on the telephone.
- A range of documents was considered by inspectors, including the school’s analysis of how well it is doing, the school development plan, information about pupils’ progress, checks on the quality of teaching, minutes of governing body meetings, and records relating to attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors also examined work in pupils’ books.
- Inspectors took account of 72 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and considered 19 responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Andy Purcell

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is similar in size to most primary schools.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority) is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- Most pupils are from a White British heritage and there are very few pupils at the early stages of learning to speak English as an additional language.
- The school provides part-time places for three- and four-year-old children in the Nursery.
- The headteacher is a local leader of education and works closely with both the local authority and the diocese to support other schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in reading still further by providing additional support for pupils who find it difficult to match letters with the sounds that they make.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher is highly ambitious for the school. He is an excellent leader and very well supported by the governing body and the deputy and assistant headteachers. Together, they have led a relentless drive to further improve standards since the previous inspection. As a result, high levels of attainment and achievement have been maintained and there have been marked improvements to both the early years provision and to assessment procedures across the school which are now more rigorous.
- Senior and middle leaders regularly and robustly check the quality of teaching, and professional development is planned and carefully matched to the needs of individuals and school priorities. Staff feel highly valued and well supported by all school leaders and, consequently, morale is extremely high. Staff typically comment on how they work closely together and learn from each other so that they can continue to improve their practice.
- School leaders make sure that pupils' progress, including the progress of children in the early years, is rigorously checked and that any pupils in danger of falling behind are quickly identified. Additional support is then matched closely to pupils' needs. The outstanding achievement of all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils eligible for pupil premium funding, confirms the school's strong commitment to tackling discrimination and providing all pupils with the same excellent opportunities to succeed.
- The curriculum meets pupils' needs and prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Through the school council pupils are encouraged to share their opinions and develop their understanding of democracy which helps to foster good relations. There is also a range of opportunities for pupils to gain first-hand experiences, such as trips to Turton Towers to experience what it was like when the Stuarts were on the throne. What is more, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is given excellent attention; this is evident in the way that pupils learn and play so very well together.
- The primary school sport funding is used very effectively. There is a wide range of after-school sporting activities that pupils can join in with. There are also specialist coaches working with pupils and staff on developing gymnastic skills. An increased number of pupils are now participating in sporting activities thereby improving their healthy lifestyles.
- The local authority provides a 'light touch' support for this outstanding school. The headteacher works successfully with both the local authority and the diocese to provide support for other schools.
- Safeguarding procedures are robust and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body is highly supportive of the school. It is very well informed about the quality of teaching and has an excellent understanding of pupils' progress information. Governors have links with specific subjects, regular meetings with staff, receive comprehensive reports from the headteacher and check on the quality of teaching by visiting lessons and looking at books. They check carefully that teachers' performance is linked to pay progression and ensure that good performance is rewarded and any underperformance is tackled.

### The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

#### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere across the school. Pupils consistently demonstrate an exemplary attitude toward learning; they say that they really enjoy school and that their teachers are the best thing about it because they make learning fun.
- The eco-councillors organise litter picking events to keep the school building and grounds clean, tidy and a nice place to be. They also weigh the waste from school lunches and the class with the least waste gets a reward. This is because pupils know that they should not waste food or any other resources.
- School councillors value their role as pupil representatives and make sure that they consult all pupils when they have a decision to make, because they want everyone to be able to have their say.
- Pupils are extremely proud of the wide range of responsibilities that they take on around the school. For example, Year 6 pupils read with younger friends, play leaders make sure that all pupils have someone to play with, pupils are responsible for feeding the birds and others grow vegetables that are used in the school kitchen.

## Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Pupils say they feel safe and know that adults in school care for them very well. They have a good understanding of different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and are absolutely sure that there is no bullying at their school. Meticulous records kept by the school confirm that incidents are rare and always well managed.
- All staff and the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to Parent View and spoke to inspectors are highly supportive of school and agree that pupils are safe, happy and well behaved there.
- Pupils arrive at school on time and attend regularly; attendance is consistently above national levels, which reflects how much pupils enjoy school.

## The quality of teaching

**is outstanding**

- Pupils make excellent progress across the school because the quality of teaching is at least good, and more often outstanding in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Staff make sure that pupils are given work at the right level to challenge them and help them to make the best progress that they can. For example, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are taught English and mathematics in groups that are organised according to the different levels at which pupils are working. Teachers make excellent use of these arrangements to make sure that tasks support pupils to build upon what they already know and can do.
- Writing skills are very well developed. There are many planned opportunities to practise writing skills across subjects other than English. In addition the work completed in writing books is exceptionally well presented and of a consistently high quality across the school. Year 6 pupils produced some excellent descriptions of mythical beasts that brought the creatures immediately to life for the reader. For example, 'who could fail to visualise the beast with 'piercing sapphire eyes and ruby red and scarlet fire exploding from between ivory gnashers'.
- Staff rightly place a great emphasis upon developing basic mathematical skills and providing opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to solving problems. For example, during one mathematics lesson pupils were calculating the missing angles in a range of shapes. One pupil was able to explain comprehensively and confidently how he had used his knowledge of the sum of the angles in a triangle to calculate the sum of the angles in a pentagon. He then used addition and subtraction skills to calculate the missing angle.
- The teaching of reading is largely very successful and pupils are encouraged to read regularly. However, the relatively small numbers of pupils who find phonics (matching letters and sounds) difficult are not always supported as well as they could be. This is because there are not enough appropriate books or specific activities available to help these pupils to successfully acquire this skill.
- Teachers mark books regularly and make suggestions to pupils on how they can improve their work. Pupils initial the comment to indicate that they have read it and make every effort to follow the guidance and learn from their mistakes.
- When teachers introduce the learning they give a clear and concise explanation of what they expect pupils to achieve and pupils respond by getting on enthusiastically with their tasks. Pupils then use all of the resources available, including sharing ideas with each other and prompts displayed around the classroom, to help them to produce the best work that they can.
- Teamwork between teaching assistants and teachers is highly effective and guarantees an excellent level of support for pupils with additional learning needs. Pastoral needs are also very well catered for. For example, small group activities help pupils who find working together difficult to successfully develop their turn-taking and cooperative skills. Moreover, all pupils have the opportunity to join a meditation session to help them to relax during lunch time and be fully prepared to engage in learning later in the day.

## The achievement of pupils

**is outstanding**

- In Key Stage 1 pupils continue to build upon the excellent start that they make to their learning in early years. By the end of Year 2, pupils consistently reach standards that are above or well above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- At the end of Key Stage 2 there was a slight dip in attainment in reading in 2013, which has been well explained by the school. In 2014 attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 was significantly above national levels.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils make the progress expected of them in reading, writing and

mathematics and the proportion of pupils making better than expected progress is often higher than the national level. From their starting points pupils make excellent progress across the school; the school's assessment information and the work seen in pupils' books indicate that this will continue.

- In the 2014 Year 1 screening for phonics (which checks pupils' ability to match letters with the sounds that they make) three quarters of pupils reached the required standard meaning that most pupils acquire this reading skill well. Data show that most pupils achieve well in reading. Older pupils who read to inspectors did so fluently and were able to discuss their favourite authors and books.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same outstanding progress as others in school. This is because their needs are identified early and well-trained staff work closely with parents to get to know exactly what support individual pupils require. When required, school staff forge excellent relationships with external agencies and apply appropriate strategies to help support the learning of pupils with additional needs. When necessary, the same high quality support is provided for pupils at the early stages of learning English.
- The most able pupils make exceptional progress. In class they are consistently given tasks that make them think hard about their work. A specialist teacher has recently been appointed to provide lessons for the most able mathematicians to help prepare them to achieve Level 6 in the national tests, which is the highest level available in Key Stage 2. Moreover, they have the opportunity to engage in lessons at the local high school to help develop their skills still further.
- At the end of Year 6 in 2014, disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding attained at one year ahead of their classmates in writing, two terms ahead in mathematics and at a similar level in reading. When compared to pupils nationally, the disadvantaged pupils at school attained at two terms ahead in reading, four terms ahead in mathematics and five terms ahead in writing. The progress of the small numbers of disadvantaged pupils currently attending the school is similar to that of their classmates and any remaining gaps are rapidly closing.

### Early years provision

### is outstanding

- Children in the early years enjoy a highly successful start to their education. From their individual starting points they make exceptional progress and, by the end of the Reception class, a higher proportion of children reach a good level of development than is found nationally.
- Communication with parents is excellent. Staff are available to talk to parents on a daily basis and parents can read and contribute toward their child's record of achievement because the documents are available on a secure on-line site. What is more, parents send 'WOW' cards in to school which record special achievements and events that take place at home. Highly effective two-way communication results in staff knowing children extremely well. This helps staff to plan learning tasks that appeal to children and encourage them to become fully involved in the exciting activities available.
- Nursery and Reception class children consistently demonstrate an enthusiasm for learning and their behaviour is of the highest quality. Routines are extremely well established and children follow instructions very well. A caring staff, together with a highly stimulating and secure indoor and outdoor environment, keep children very safe.
- The quality of teaching is excellent. Opportunities are planned to enable children to develop curiosity and imagination. For example, children were sifting carefully through the sand to find buried creatures; they then had to make up a story which included their character. Highly effective prompts and skilful questioning from the teacher gave the children ideas and helped them to tell very exciting stories.
- Provision in the early years has improved since the previous inspection. Leadership is now very strong. There are closer links with Key Stage 1 so that early years staff know exactly what children will be expected to achieve when they join Year 1. This helps staff to prepare children exceptionally well for the next stage of their learning journey.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105334
<b>Local authority</b>	Bury
<b>Inspection number</b>	453274

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	246
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Julie Kernaghan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Dennis Harrison
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 764 4014
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