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Mrs Elizabeth Worrell-Jude  
Headteacher  
Guardian Angels Catholic Primary School  
Whitman Road  
London  
E3 4RB

Dear Mrs Worrell-Jude

### **Short inspection of Guardian Angels Catholic Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in July 2014.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection.

**There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

You and your deputy headteacher are a well-established leadership team. You have faced with resilience the difficulties of recruitment and retention of staff. You acknowledge that systems you have introduced to improve standards, especially in the teaching of reading and writing, have not become as embedded as well as you would like. The attainment of pupils in the early years and key stage 1 is persistently below average and disadvantaged pupils do not do as well as their peers. Pupils make better progress in key stage 2.

Leaders' evaluation of areas that need further improvement is accurate. You recognise that the quality of questioning and the levels of challenge given to pupils is variable across the school. Teachers are growing in confidence in using the school's assessment systems. However, more work is needed to ensure that teachers use accurate assessments so that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable.

You devote much time and energy to supporting pupils to be happy and safe at school. You are well aware of the circumstances of some pupils that make their attendance and engagement with their learning a challenge for them. You do your utmost to help them to successfully overcome these barriers.

The pupils I met with and spoke to in classrooms were very polite and articulate.

They told me how much they appreciate what their teachers do to help them learn and keep them safe. Pupils value their positive relationships with their teachers, who give them 'tips on how to remember things'. They know that the completion of 'cold tasks' and 'hot tasks', when they redraft their work, means that their writing improves. They described to me 'lots of opportunities' to read and their reading logs indicate that pupils of all abilities read regularly at school and home. Pupils say teachers help them with anything they find difficult and plan lots of activities that make learning fun.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You ensure that your staff receive up-to-date safeguarding training. You reinforce this with reminders in briefings so that your staff are vigilant to look out for any causes of concern about a pupil. Your procedures for monitoring attendance are thorough. You and your staff know your pupils and their families well. You pursue the support needed by vulnerable pupils and maintain close communications with outside agencies to help keep children safe. You follow correct procedures to confirm details when pupils leave the school and are alert to when pupils are at risk of going missing from education.

You maintain a safeguarding culture in the school, with high levels of supervision of pupils at playtimes and at the start and end of the day. You are mindful of risks, too, in the wider community, and organise workshops to provide pupils with guidance on topics such as 'stranger danger' and cyber bullying.

The large majority of pupils who completed the survey for this inspection stated that they enjoy coming to school. They also said they feel safe at school and have an adult at the school they can talk to if they have something worrying them.

We discussed how the administration of records relating to the recruitment of staff needs to be better organised. You and governors have not kept the close eye on this as you should have done. You ensured that all the required checks were up to date before the end of the inspection. No pupils were placed at risk as a result of this shortfall.

### **Inspection findings**

- When we met at the beginning of the inspection, we agreed on some key lines of enquiry. The first of these was the effectiveness of actions you have taken to improve the quality of reading and writing across the school. Both reading and writing featured in the areas for the improvement in the last inspection report.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have introduced a new scheme for the teaching of writing. This has been successful in ensuring that pupils frequently complete pieces of extended writing. The work in their books demonstrates pupils' resilience and perseverance in completing long passages of writing. Pupils routinely improve their work based on their teachers' assessments. How well pupils make progress varies with the quality of assessment in different year groups.

- A range of initiatives encourages pupils to read more, inspires their imagination and motivates them to write. Teachers thoughtfully choose topics that interest pupils and provide resources that help them to access texts more easily and to boost their comprehension.
- Pupils use the school library frequently. Their reading records show that most read regularly at school and at home. The school provides additional support for pupils who are falling behind and those who might not have opportunities to read much at home. Leaders are forging links with parents and carers to give them guidance on how to support their children's learning at home. Recent workshops for parents on how reading and writing are taught in the school have been popular and successful.
- The establishment of the new scheme and other strategies to improve reading and writing are in the early stages of showing impact. This is especially so in key stage 2 for the pupils who have experienced it for longer. The school's current achievement information indicates that more pupils in all year groups are attaining greater depth in reading and writing.
- The second key line of enquiry we agreed was the actions you have taken to improve the attainment of disadvantaged pupils. This is because in most subjects disadvantaged pupils do not attain as well as their peers in school and all pupils nationally.
- You are clear on how you use the pupil premium grant to support disadvantaged pupils. Leaders know individual pupils and their families very well and identify key barriers to their learning. They ensure that pupils receive targeted support, whether related to special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities or family issues. However, leaders, including governors, are not reviewing sufficiently or regularly enough which interventions are helping the most so that disadvantaged pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. Disadvantaged pupils continue to lag behind their peers.
- We agreed as a third key line of enquiry to look at the actions leaders have taken to improve outcomes for children in the early years. This is because, while there has been some improvement in recent years, the proportion of children who attain a good level of development in the early years remains below average.
- The early years team has implemented sensible and effective strategies to boost children's reading and writing skills. Introduced towards the end of the last academic year and becoming established this year, initiatives using storytelling and stimulating topics promote children's interest in writing.
- Leaders recognise the important link between the phonics children are learning and the books available to them. The early years team have recently purchased new reading materials to enable children to practise their new skills more effectively. Adults in the early years are mindful of ways in which to promote boys' interests and opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills. This is important as you identified that boys do less well than girls. You have already developed areas of the early years so that resources are equally motivating to girls and boys and encourage them to write. Further improvements are ongoing.
- The early years leaders engage productively with other schools and organisations

to share good practice, gather ideas and make sure their assessments are accurate. The school's achievement information indicates early signs of these strategies leading to more children attaining a good level of development. Children's reading and writing skills are developing better than last year.

- We agreed on a fourth key line of enquiry; looking at the actions you have taken to reduce the levels of pupils' persistent absence. This is because more pupils' than average are regularly absent from school.
- Leaders work closely with pupils and their families to help them overcome the causes of their persistent absence from school. Your procedures for reviewing pupils' attendance and prompt follow-up of absences are organised well. You invest thoughtfully so that pupils are able to receive specialist support at school, including from a counsellor and the attendance and welfare officer. You ensure your staff forge strong links with families and work well with many to come up with plans and routines to help individual pupils.
- There is evidence of improvement with some pupils due to the personalised and well-judged approach you and your staff have taken. You have raised the profile to parents and pupils of the importance of good attendance and punctuality, including awards in assemblies and in newsletters. There is still work to be done in supporting those who are more resistant to the school's expectations, so that the levels of persistent absence are at least in line with national levels.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school's assessment systems are embedded so that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate across the school
- teachers use accurate assessments of pupils' work to inform their planning so that individuals and groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make the progress of which they are capable
- best practice in the school is shared so that systems for the teaching of reading and writing are used consistently well
- pupils' attainment improves and the proportions attaining at a greater depth continue to increase
- they review the expenditure of the pupil premium grant so that the most effective interventions lead to improved attainment by disadvantaged pupils
- levels of pupils' persistent absence reduce swiftly
- the administration of records relating to the recruitment of staff are consistently well organised and up to date
- they draw on external support appropriately and productively.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Archdiocese of Westminster, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Tower Hamlets. This letter will be published on the

Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Amanda Carter-Fraser  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, I met with you and other school leaders, the chair of the governing body and a group of pupils. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. I met with a group of pupils and looked at examples of pupils' work. I held informal conversations with pupils and staff in classrooms and around the school. I observed the behaviour of pupils in and out of lessons. I took into account the surveys completed by staff and pupils for this inspection. I also examined the responses to Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire. I looked at a wide range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, minutes of governors' meetings, and records relating to the safeguarding of pupils and recruitment of staff.