

Guardian Angels Catholic Primary School

Whitman Road, London E3 4RB

Inspection dates

12–13 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, managers and governors have not acted in a timely manner to tackle the concerns identified in the previous inspection.
- Key documents, such as policies, are not reviewed when they ought to be. This is because there are no well-embedded systems and checks to ensure that this happens.
- Pupils' progress remains inconsistent across the school. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Teachers do not use assessment well enough to inform their planning. This results in work which does not always match pupils' starting points well, particularly for the most and least able pupils.
- Teachers do not check pupils' understanding carefully enough in lessons to be able to intervene to explain or extend learning.
- Teachers do not always have high enough expectations of behaviour in lessons. Consequently, low-level disruption is common.
- Pupils do not consistently take pride in their work; some books are not well presented.
- There is a lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities. This limits leaders' capacity to effect rapid and sustainable improvements. Middle leaders need further development in order to be fully effective in their roles. Good practice is not shared effectively.
- A significant number of parents and carers expressed concerns and frustration at the way the school communicates with them.

The school has the following strengths

- The work leaders do to keep pupils safe, including the most vulnerable pupils, is highly effective.
- Leaders foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Respect is central to the school's ethos.
- Attendance rates improved during last year.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum provides well for pupils' physical and emotional well-being.
- Pupils have secure phonics knowledge, which they use well to help them when reading.
- Early years is well led. Consequently, children get a good start to their education.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management, including governance, so that there is greater capacity for implementing school improvement priorities by:
 - streamlining systems so that key documents, including policies, are easily accessible and regularly reviewed, especially those that are statutory
 - ensuring that there is clarity of roles and responsibilities
 - developing middle leaders so that they are more effective and independent in their roles
 - ensuring that good practice in leadership is shared across the school
 - improving communication with parents.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment so that progress is consistently good across the school by:
 - ensuring that all staff use pupils' starting points to plan effective learning for them, particularly for the most and least able, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities
 - ensuring that work presents greater challenge for pupils at all levels
 - ensuring that assessment is accurate and used to inform planning for future learning
 - checking more carefully during lessons to ensure that learning is either clarified or extended where necessary
 - promoting behaviour for learning more effectively so that low-level disruption is rare and pupils take more pride in their work.

An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, have not ensured that progress is consistently good across the school. They did not respond in a timely way to the recommendations from the previous inspection. Appropriate development plans are consequently still not in place.
- Despite having an accurate view of the quality of teaching across the school, leaders have not used this knowledge to rapidly improve teaching, learning and assessment so that they are consistently good.
- The leadership of SEN is not effective. The role is divided between senior leaders and the special needs coordinator, who is bought in from the local authority one day per week on a part-time basis; however, they do not share information effectively. What this means in practice is that there is a gap in terms of the strategic overview of how well this group is performing. This has resulted in pockets of poor progress for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Systems that allow the school to run smoothly, for example for ensuring ease of access to key documents and information, are not efficient. Leaders found it difficult to provide key information to the inspection team, including about how successful they have been in improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Documents were not completed or evaluated as fully as they ought to be.
- There is a tier of middle leadership. However, many of these leaders need further development to be fully effective in their roles. Moreover, where there are examples of more effective practice, this is not shared across the school so that others benefit from it.
- Staff are positive about the professional development opportunities they have received. However, this has not ensured that the quality of teaching is uniformly good. Staff at the very early stages of their careers say that they have been well supported.
- Parents expressed mixed views about the school. Many said that their children were happy, and all were positive about safety. However, a majority had significant concerns about how well leaders communicate with them.
- Leaders have been working more closely with local schools to support with the process of assessing and moderating pupils' work. However, teachers are not using this information well when planning lessons.
- Leaders are currently working to broaden the curriculum further and make it more meaningful for pupils. They are also strengthening links between subjects so that pupils have more opportunity to practise key skills throughout the day. It is too soon to see the impact of this work on pupils' engagement and outcomes.
- Leaders foster pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well and ensure that pupils have a good understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils learn about democracy by voting for the school council. They show a strong degree of tolerance when discussing lifestyles different from their own, for example a family with a same-sex couple as parents. This is because respect is given a very high priority in the

school. The curriculum offers ample opportunity to discuss moral issues. For example, reading the novel 'Pig Boy' led to in-depth debates about animal rights. This work is helping pupils to be well prepared for life in modern Britain.

- Pupils' physical well-being is a priority for leaders. To this end, there are plenty of chances to take part in sporting activities, both during and after school. Pupils are proud to represent the school at competitive events.

Governance of the school

- The work of the governing body has not contributed sufficiently to ironing out inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and in pupils' progress. Governors:
 - have not ensured that all policies and reports are fully reviewed and evaluated
 - did not ensure that their response to the findings of the previous inspection was swift and effective, for example while some of the issues were discussed at a meeting late in the summer term, governors have not yet challenged leaders robustly as to how they will meet each of the recommended next steps identified in the report
 - have not checked rigorously enough how well leaders use the funding for disadvantaged pupils to improve outcomes for that group
 - do, however, have an understanding of the difficult context in which the school works, with high numbers of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that child protection records are comprehensive and easy to follow. They liaise effectively with other agencies, being insistent when they have to be to make sure that the most vulnerable pupils and their families get the support they need. There is a high caseload, given the size of the school. Leaders prioritise this work, which they approach with care and compassion.
- Staff are clear what to do should they need to report any concerns. Pupils have various routes for reporting anything that worries them, including special boxes placed around the school. They say that this helps them feel very safe. Parents unanimously stated that their children feel safe at school.
- Procedures for dealing with pupils with specific medical needs are robust. For example, there are specially prepared 'grab bags' to take on trips so that there is no chance that pupils will be without the medication they need. Regular checks ensure that all medication is within its expiry date.
- During the course of the inspection, there were some issues with the single central record where pre-employment checks are recorded. Some of this was due to a computer malfunction. Leaders, with the support of the governors, ensured that this was remedied by the end of the inspection. No pupils were placed at risk because of this shortfall.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is too variable across the school to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress.
- Teachers do not take careful enough account of pupils' starting points and available assessment information when planning work and providing resources for them. This manifests itself in a number of ways. For example, several of the pupils who read with inspectors had books that were either far too hard or far too easy for them. In some cases, the records that had been passed up from the previous teacher were not heeded, resulting in pupils being given books that were several stages lower on the school's reading scheme than they ought to be.
- Teachers' assessments are not always accurate, which further contributes to the work set for pupils being either too hard or too easy.
- In several year groups, the needs of most-able pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are not well met as teaching is aimed at pupils from average starting points. This means that it is hard for those of lower ability to access activities and there is not enough challenge for the most able.
- Where planning does not meet pupils' needs, they do not focus on their learning, which impedes their progress. This results in low-level disruption as pupils lose interest and begin to chat, fidget or otherwise disturb their peers. Teachers do not always tackle this behaviour.
- In some lessons, adults check carefully how well pupils understand, and intervene to support their learning. Where this happens, learning is successful. However, this is not typical across the school.
- Teachers do not have consistently high expectations in terms of the presentation of work. This leads to some books looking very messy.
- The pupils who spoke with inspectors stated that teachers' feedback helps them to improve their work and know how well they are doing.
- There is some good work on developing vocabulary, particularly in upper key stage 2. Pupils are encouraged to take note of new words and use them in their own work. They use a range of strategies to work out meaning, including looking for root words. Consequently, many pupils have a good vocabulary for their age.
- Pupils speak highly of the anti-discrimination teaching they receive. For example, they talk about how important and inspiring it was to learn that there were Black women working for NASA in the 1950s and 60s who made a significant contribution to the space race.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident learners, in some cases confident enough to tell the teacher when

work is too easy for them. Pupils can explain how the new approach to writing – talking and mapping out the story first – helps them become better writers.

- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and say that it happens very rarely at school. This is because there is a strong culture of respect.
- Pupils state that there is no discrimination at school. They say that the most derogatory term you are likely to hear is 'cry baby'. They explain that when you misbehave, you are given the chance to reflect on your actions, which they believe is fair and helps you learn why you should not repeat that behaviour.
- Pupils appreciate all the school does to teach them how to stay safe. All the pupils who spoke to inspectors stated that they feel safe at school. They explained, for example, that they have regular fire drills and that there is a strong focus on e-safety.
- Leaders cater for pupils' physical well-being effectively. A wide range of sporting activities ensure that pupils stay active. Adults advocate healthy eating; those who supervise at lunchtime encourage pupils to make healthy choices. Pupils say that adults regularly remind them to drink enough water. There is free fruit at breaktimes, and the curriculum focuses on staying healthy.
- Pupils' emotional needs are also well met. There is a counselling service available to pupils and parents. This provides both targeted work for those directly referred but also a drop-in which anyone can access to air concerns. Case studies show how this provision has greatly helped individual pupils overcome problems and be more ready to access learning.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. There is too much low-level disruption in lessons. Pupils do not show consistently good attitudes to learning. They engage in off-task behaviour such as pulling faces at each other, fiddling intently with pencils and equipment or chatting about issues other than their work. While this behaviour is most apparent where there is weaker teaching which is not meeting pupils' needs well, this is not exclusively the case.
- Pupils do not always take pride in their work. Inspectors saw some books with very poor presentation and handwriting.
- Leaders keep detailed records of behavioural incidents. These show, for the last academic year, that in some classes, incidents increased across the course of the year rather than decreased. Leaders had not given those involved the support needed to stem this deterioration.
- Pupils' behaviour at playtime and when moving around the school is calm and orderly. They listen to and follow adults' instructions well.
- Leaders work highly effectively with pupils who have particular behavioural issues. They put bespoke measures in place which result in pupils learning to manage their own behaviour increasingly well, sometimes to the point where there are no longer any concerns. Consequently, there have been no exclusions for at least five years.
- The school continues to find personalised solutions and incentives to support pupils who are persistently absent to come to school more often. Close work with families, linked to a range of other strategies such as offering places at breakfast club and

rewards for good or improved attendance, led to a successful reduction in the number of pupils classified as persistent absentees last year.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Progress is inconsistent across the school in a range of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are often given work that is too easy or too hard for them. Over time, this leads to poor rates of progress for individuals and for groups.
- This variable progress is particularly noticeable for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. For example, in some year groups, the proportion reaching age-related expectations by the end of the year in reading, writing and/or mathematics decreased from summer 2017 to summer 2018. In effect, this means that a number of pupils fell behind in their learning.
- In some classes, the most able pupils do not achieve as well as they could. They are not given work that stretches them and so their progress stalls.
- Outcomes at the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics were above average in 2018, this showed a considerable improvement on the previous year.
- Year-on-year, a high proportion of pupils reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check in Year 1. This helps them to read fluently as they move on to Year 2 and beyond.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of early years is good. Leaders put a strong emphasis on developing practitioners' knowledge and skills as to how young children learn, looking at current research and best practice in early years education. This means that activities are well planned to meet children's needs and engage their interest.
- Leaders also think carefully about how the environment, both indoors and outdoors, supports learning. For example, resources are carefully arranged so that children can easily find what they want. This helps children become confident in making choices about their own learning. During the inspection, children playing outside found a spider and wanted to observe it more closely. They knew where they could get special magnifying equipment and therefore spent a considerable period of time looking at how many legs the spider had, its markings and other key features. This not only developed their knowledge about spiders but also their observation and collaboration skills as they shared and discussed their findings.
- Adults are skilful at intervening when children's learning has stalled. Equally, they know when to step back and let children explore for themselves.
- Regular and accurate assessment, including ongoing observations, means that teachers can plan activities that interest and engage children and ensure that they develop the necessary skills for the next stage in their education.
- This well-thought-out provision results in children making good progress from their starting points. The proportion of children who are well prepared for the reading, writing and mathematics they will meet in Year 1 has increased year-on-year since this

new, research-based approach was initiated.

- Adults have high expectations of behaviour. Children quickly learn what those expectations are and are keen to meet them. The children seen during the inspection had only been in school for a few days, yet already understood that they had to put their hand up to speak and stand in a line waiting to go out to play. They were proud that they could do this.
- Children are polite to each other and to adults. They tidy up sensibly and are confident enough to push themselves outside of their comfort zone and take a risk, for example overcoming their fear of spiders to take a closer look.

School details

Unique reference number	100945
Local authority	Tower Hamlets
Inspection number	10055199

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Nottage
Headteacher	Elizabeth Worrell-Jude
Telephone number	020 8980 3939
Website	www.guardianangelsprimary.org.uk/
Email address	admin2@guardianangels.towerhamlets.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2018

Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is more than double the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is over double the national average. A number of these pupils join the school from abroad with little or no English on arrival.
- The school serves a very diverse community. Nearly three quarters of pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly average.
- The school is a Catholic voluntary-aided school in the diocese of Westminster. Its last diocese inspection (S48) took place in July 2016.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in a range of subjects. They visited every class at least once. The headteacher accompanied them on a number of these visits.
- Inspectors spent time in the dinner hall, in the playground and when pupils gathered together for whole-school mass. They also heard pupils read and took account of pupils' views through formal and informal discussions.
- Inspectors talked with pupils about their work, both in lessons and in more formal meetings, as well as looking at the work they have completed in their books so far this year.
- The inspection team took into account the views of parents, including the 23 responses to Ofsted's online survey 'Parent View', the comments left on the free-text facility and discussions with parents before and after school during the course of the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of school documentation, including records of pre-employment checks, documents relating to safeguarding and child protection, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, and information about pupils' academic performance.

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Martin	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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