



St Anne's and Guardian Angels Catholic Primary School

Underwood Road E1 5AW

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 30th September 2021

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- Pupils are welcoming, articulate, and enthusiastic and demonstrate a real thirst and resilience for learning.
- The scheme of work used is mapped to the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* which forms the basis of the teaching provided.
- Staff create a positive, safe and nurturing climate of learning for all pupils.
- Pupil attainment is in line with other core subjects.
- Pupils are offered a range of opportunities to support them in becoming critical and independent thinkers.
- Behaviour and attitudes to learning by all pupils is exemplary.
- Effective teaching strategies are evident in RE lessons and lead to good outcomes for most children.
- The headteacher, governors and the lead for religious education show and articulate a strong commitment to driving forward standards in religious education.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- Pupils are not always experiencing a broad and creative curriculum in religious education.
- There are some inconsistencies in approaches to teaching, so opportunities for challenge are sometimes missed.

B. The Catholic life of the school is outstanding

- This is a very welcoming and vibrant school, fully living out the school mission: 'Excellence together with Christ at the centre'.
- Religious education is allocated its full 10% of teaching time as required by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales.
- Pupils are actively involved in supporting those in need and proactive in responding locally, nationally and globally.
- The quality, strength and warmth of the relationships of all members of the school is outstanding and the school creates a tangible sense of unity and mutual respect.
- The partnerships between school, parents, parish governors and diocese are exceptional. The shared vision and deep commitment to St Anne's and Guardian Angels is visible and permeates throughout all areas of school life.
- The headteacher, leadership team, staff and governors are an example for all - outward facing and inclusive - and they have created a wonderful new, cohesive and joyful school community.
- The links with the parish priest are excellent in supporting the school community with their liturgical and Eucharistic experience and understanding.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The previous inspection highlighted the need to identify and develop assessment and to further enhance teachers' subject knowledge. The school remains committed to these areas; they are continually striving for improvement in classroom teaching and are ready to adapt current practice in anticipation of the introduction of a new religious education curriculum.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The content of the religious education (RE) curriculum of this school meets the requirements of the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory* (RECD). There is some evidence (for example class floor books, Twitter, the school's website and YouTube channel) to show creativity in the RE teaching and learning, but there is room for this to be developed further within lessons. Pupils are encouraged to wonder and to think about 'Big Questions', and utilise Philosophy for Children (P4C) to help them become informed, independent and critical thinkers. Key vocabulary is highlighted effectively for pupils to encourage them to talk and write about their knowledge and understanding of their faith. Through learning about other faiths in the local community and organising visits to the local mosque, Jewish Museum and the visiting speakers, pupils show and respect a tolerance for all faiths and cultures.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupil achievement is good. Pupils are articulate, enthusiastic and demonstrate a real thirst and resilience for learning. This attitude has a positive impact on the progress they make and pupils feel that lessons 'help them come closer to God'. The behaviour and attitude of pupils observed across the school was exemplary. Generally, pupils are keen to share their work and discuss what they know about RE, though they find it more difficult to explain what they need to do in order to move on. Where feedback is used effectively, this contributes well to pupils' progress. The school is developing its own internal systems for assessment and leaders are learning to use these effectively to track progress. Internal moderations are used to improve teacher subject knowledge of the age-related expectations, thereby developing a shared understanding of assessment across the school. Pupil attainment is in line with other core subjects. Most pupils make good progress in RE and there is a level of challenge in some year groups though this is not consistent throughout the school. Religious literacy is stronger amongst the older pupils. In Year 6, pupils were seen to be challenged effectively when asked to justify their personal choices over who may have the most right to enter the Kingdom of Heaven from a list of different groups of people in society.

The quality of teaching is good

The quality of teaching across the school is good. This leads to pupils achieving well over time. Teachers have improved levels of RE subject knowledge and this is leading to the planning and teaching of lessons that are beginning to deepen pupils' levels of religious literacy and in making links to previous learning. In Year 4 for example, children made links to the relationship between Moses and God in the burning bush to previous learning about Abraham, and were able to use this knowledge to see how it would impact their own actions and responses today. All staff have worked hard to develop their learning intentions and use of success criteria to improve outcomes for all pupils. Support staff were observed playing a key role in supporting children with higher needs. Teachers endeavour to ensure all pupils are engaged in their learning. However, there needs to be further consistency applied in the feedback and in the responses from the pupils to the deeper

questions asked to further challenge and extend all pupils in RE lessons. The parish priest of the amalgamated school actively supports and helps to develop staff and pupil subject knowledge as well as enabling them to understand the key role of the Church in their lives.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education is good

Leadership and management of RE are good in this school. The school has undergone significant change over the last three years and the leadership team of St Anne's and Guardian Angels has created a new school which keeps religious education at the heart of the curriculum. The RE leader, along with the head and deputy, have a clear vision which is shared by all staff members and the governing body. The self-evaluation is largely accurate, recognising areas for development and highlighting effective strategies already in operation to address areas for improvement. Religious education targets are part of staff appraisals and reflect the current priorities in the school development plan. The wide range of systems and initiatives are not yet tracked comprehensively or fully woven into the religious education curriculum and applied consistently in all classes. The school recognises its areas for development and is committed to moving this newly amalgamated school further forward. The governors are well informed and have been instrumental in the smooth transition from two schools to one cohesive, stable and joyful school.

What should the school do to develop further in classroom religious education?

- Ensure teachers have a shared understanding of the new monitoring and assessment procedures to allow teachers to track progress effectively.
- Offer a range of creative approaches within RE lessons to support all pupils in meeting outcomes.
- Provide opportunities for challenge in lessons for all groups of learners.

B. The Catholic life of the school

What has improved since the last inspection?

The school has undergone significant change since the last inspection. The school made effective and beneficial links before the pandemic but again experienced difficulties when the parish priest of St Anne's left. Since the pandemic, the parish priest of the amalgamated school has joined the school as the RE link governor and is a very valued and committed member of the leadership of St Anne's and Guardian Angels. His involvement with the school will support the liturgical and sacramental life of the staff and pupils.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is outstanding

The curriculum meets the requirements of the Bishops' Conference with 10% of curriculum time allocated to RE. The budget for RE is comparable to the budgets for other core subjects. The leadership team, supported by the parish priest and governors, work very hard to ensure that pupils are provided with the best opportunities possible and that staff are supported in their professional development. RE displays and prayer corners are in place in every classroom with key words being prominent to enhance pupils' religious literacy. There are themed displays in all communal areas throughout the school including those celebrating 'The Year of St Joseph' and the rosary. Parents recognise the importance the school places on its Catholic life. Governors are very well informed and work closely with the leadership team to develop and review the quality of pupils' religious experience and are aware of areas for further development. The school clearly places a high emphasis on the centrality of the Catholic faith to its mission and life.

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

is good

The school meets its commitment to ensuring prayer and worship are a daily part of pupils' experience at school. Pupils are confident in using the Examen as part of their prayer life, providing opportunities for reflection and quiet contemplation. The recent introduction of 'House Saints' has led to a deepening of pupils' knowledge about these gospel writers and a celebration of their importance in the pupils' lives. Pupils are becoming more confident in preparing and leading acts of worship and do so with reverence and pride but all children would benefit from more opportunities to be creative and reflective at these times. The newly amalgamated school has recently changed its pupil leadership model and has just appointed Mini Vinnies and Green ambassadors who are excited about their new roles in supporting the school to further develop their Catholic worship. Due to Covid, the school has identified that work is needed on developing children's knowledge of and familiarity with the Mass. The parish priest has started to celebrate Mass with each year group, explaining each part to aid understanding.

The contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice –**is outstanding**

It is clear that the school is a very nurturing environment where pupils are encouraged to develop and celebrate their gifts and talents so that they can flourish and become valuable members of the community. Pupils have many opportunities to share and explore these talents as well as have them celebrated in weekly award assemblies and via the school's social media channels. Those that were interviewed expressed how much they valued and appreciated this recognition. Pupils are extremely polite, welcoming and friendly and it is evident that they are taught to respect, value and celebrate everyone in their school and the world around them. They spoke of the importance of learning about other faiths as this helped them reach out to their surrounding community. The school promotes service and self-sacrifice in all aspects of school life and the pupils understand the importance of supporting those in need. Through regular assemblies and fundraising events for charities including Whitechapel Mission, CAFOD and Providence Row Food bank collections, the pupils understand that the Catholic community has a collective responsibility to be of service to the local community and the wider world. This service continued through lockdown by supporting families with food deliveries and Caritas vouchers. Some pupils were not able to make links between these acts of service and the theology underpinning these actions and this is seen as an area for development. The school is training the pupils to take a leadership role when planning charitable acts through their house groups and the newly created Mini Vinnie society. This training should continue to ensure that the children feel ownership of this charity work. The pupils spoke enthusiastically about planning charitable events in the future to support CAFOD and local charities.

The partnership with parents, school and parish, and collaboration as an integral part of the diocese through its relationship with the diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf**is outstanding**

Partnerships at all levels are outstanding and the school should be proud of its work in this area. Parents are very complimentary and appreciative of the school's work as demonstrated by the responses when meeting inspectors and by the questionnaires reviewed during the inspection. Parents think that their children receive a very good start in life. There are now much stronger links with the two school parishes, and the parish priest of Guardian Angels serves as RE link governor, adding to the development of the school. Throughout the recent lockdowns, the parish priest continued to visit the school providing support and spiritual guidance. The new early years and infant playgrounds were blessed before lockdown by Bishop Hudson and the newly merged school was blessed in a special socially distanced liturgy in September 2020. The school leadership team work closely with other Catholic schools within the deanery for moderation, peer reviews and to participate in deanery meetings. The leadership team and the governing body are forward thinking, looking for and forging a variety of positive partnership opportunities. They have created a cohesive and seemingly seamless move from two schools to one very united one. The school has shown the highest level of care and understanding for the needs of a merging and vulnerable community whilst continuing to strive for the highest standards.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school**is outstanding**

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school is outstanding. The headteacher with the senior leaders, staff and governors are an example for all - outward facing and inclusive - and have created a wonderful new, close and joyful school community. They are fully committed to the Church's mission in education and their mission statement, 'Excellence together with Christ at the centre' is at the heart of all they do. Pupils and staff experience an inclusive community dedicated to the development of the whole person. The outstanding leadership enables pupils and staff, of all faiths and none, to experience a rich Catholic life. The leadership team has a clear and accurate action plan which identifies the areas for further development. Governors are clearly effective and play a proactive role in supporting RE and the Catholic life of the school.

What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?

- Ensure that pupils are able to make links between acts of service and the theology that underpins them.
- Support all pupils to become more independent when planning and leading acts of worship.

Information about this school

- The school is a 2-form entry Catholic primary school in the locality of Whitechapel.
- The school serves the parishes of St Anne's, Whitechapel and Guardian Angels, Mile End.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 47%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 18% and from other faiths is 7%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 80%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is 3.
- There are 32% of pupils in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 13 have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above the national average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is well above the national average.
- There is a well above average rate of families claiming free school meals.
- 82 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (30%).

Department for Education Number	211/3411
Unique Reference Number	100950
Local Authority	Tower Hamlets

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	2-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	281
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Vikki Bradney-Spencer
Headteacher	Mrs Sheila Mouna
Telephone number	02072476327
Website	www.stannesgaprimary.com
Email address	head@stannesgaprimary.com
Date of previous inspection	June 2015
Grades from previous inspection:	
Classroom religious education	Outstanding
The Catholic life of the school	Outstanding

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out (i) under the requirements of the Canon 806 and (ii) in accordance with the Framework for Diocesan Inspections 2015 approved by the Archbishop of Westminster and (iii) under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection.
- During the inspection 11 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 3 assemblies and a class act of worship.
- Meetings were held with school staff, pupils and governors.
- Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

Ms Maureen O'Donoghue

Ms Tracey Peters

Ms Robina Maher

Mr Fearghal Nash

Lead Inspector

Associate Inspector

Associate Inspector

Associate Inspector

Information about inspection

The purpose of Diocesan inspection is to report to and advise the Archbishop on the quality of classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school. The inspection report is also used to inform parents and carers, and the wider Catholic community. Inspection provides an opportunity to support, challenge, evaluate and promote the work of Catholic schools. It also assists schools in the work of self-evaluation and improvement, and enables the Diocese to celebrate with schools their sense of identity and their strengths as Catholic schools.

Inspection Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

This report is published by the Diocese of Westminster and is available at:

<http://rcdow.org.uk/education/schools>

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