



INSPECTION REPORT

St Gildas Primary School
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DfES Number: 123857

Headteacher: Mrs Deborah Evans
Chair of Governors: Mr Colin Young

Canonical Inspection under Canon 806 on behalf of the Diocese of Clifton
and inspection of Denominational Education under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Date of inspection: 9th/10th July 2012
Date of previous inspection: 23 & 24 October 2008

Reporting Inspector: Mrs P. J. Antolik

Description of School

St Gildas is an average-sized primary school near the centre of Yeovil. 40% of its pupils come from the parish of The Holy Ghost, Yeovil with an increasing number of pupils from non-Catholic families who have chosen a faith education. Just under half of the pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and this is reflected in the similar proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Both these proportions are higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils supported at school at action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below national average. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils leaving and joining the school at different times during key stages. Since the previous inspection there have been several staff changes including the appointment of a new head teacher and senior leadership team. Around 50% of the teachers are Catholic. The school was recently awarded the Equality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1: Outstanding; Grade 2: Good; Grade 3: Satisfactory; Grade 4: Unsatisfactory

Overall effectiveness of this Catholic school

Grade 2

St Gildas provides a good Catholic education for all its pupils which is maintained and nurtured by the strong leadership of the head-teacher, senior management team, governing body, and parish priest. It has a good Catholic ethos which is open and inclusive, welcoming every person as an individual in line with the Catholic belief that everyone is made in the image and likeness of God. It has established good, valuable links with the parents, parish and wider community. All pupils respond well to the enriching provision for prayer life and liturgy which is judged as good.

The newly implemented religious education programme has begun to have an effective, positive impact on improving outcomes for pupils. This is as a result of good teaching throughout the school. Pupils with English as an additional language and special educational needs achieve as well as others owing to good support from teachers and teaching assistants. St Gildas is a school which knows itself well, identifies priorities, secures improvement and thrives on challenge in all aspects of its work and mission.

The capacity of the school community to improve and develop

Grade 1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is highly effective. It has a strong ethos rooted in Catholic values which permeates all school life. The well-being and all round personal development of each pupil is at the heart of the school's vision and is reflected in the strong sense of pastoral care. Very good relationships at all levels are a strength of the school. The committed head teacher leads motivated staff who, act as excellent role models, resulting in confident, articulate pupils who know what it means to belong to a Catholic community.

Standards at present are good but accurate indicators and predictions identified by the leadership team show a high capacity to improve.

The acquisition of skills by pupils to prepare and lead worship independently has already been identified by the school as a development point and is a key objective in the RE Action Plan.

Formal and informal monitoring of the Catholic life of the school has ensured previous areas for development have been addressed. The partnerships with other schools and organisations are good. A commitment to promote community cohesion has enabled pupils to have a well developed awareness of difference and a positive attitude of tolerance. Respect, Equality and Positivity are the core principals of the school's Mission Statement which, is reflected in a commitment to promote community cohesion. This enables pupils to acquire an excellent awareness of difference and a positive attitude of tolerance. St Gildas is the first school in Somerset to achieve the "Equality Award". They have also become a leading school in the teaching of the English as and Additional Language Programme, working with Somerset and Dorset schools to develop their own Community Cohesion policies.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop further the processes of Assessment and Recording to support pupils self-evaluation skills and aid teachers in establishing 'Next Steps' for pupils and level work accurately.
- Further develop the skills of staff and pupils in planning and leading worship independently thereby enhancing the provision of prayer and worship.

How good are outcomes for pupils, taking account of variations between different groups?

Grade 2

Outcomes for pupils are good. The school has a high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language with many of them speaking little or no English when they start school. The majority of these pupils make rapid progress in the acquisition of English because of the high quality level of support provided. This is also noted in the Ofsted 12 report which says "Those pupils who join at different points in the key stages make equally good progress". (Ofsted 2012). As they settle into their new environment they thrive in the caring, family atmosphere the school provides. They become confident, mature, independent learners with a positive attitude to school life.

Pupils make a good contribution to the Catholic life of the school and benefit greatly from it. They take on responsibilities willingly and eagerly and are able to articulate why they behave and act in the way they do. They understand that the school ethos is rooted in Christ. Pupils develop the necessary skills and positive attitudes for life in school and beyond.

Pupils' response to and participation in collective worship is good. The parish priest is a visible weekly visitor to the school and meets regularly with the head teacher. Masses and liturgical celebrations are frequently held both in the church and main hall of the school. The pupils participate with good levels of interest and engagement and their response in both small and large prayerful gatherings is respectful, reverent, and reflective. They talk of feeling calm and peaceful after times of worship and enjoy taking part. Many are beginning to acquire the necessary skills to plan and lead prayer and worship independently. The prayer life of the school makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. There are

quiet reflective areas set aside in the school for pupils of other faiths to pray quietly if they wish. Various ethnic groups from the school, parish and community celebrate their religious festivals and customs in school and the school council commented that "this shows we are all part of God's family".

Religious Education is given a high priority and pupils of all denominations are respected and included in the celebrations of the school and its liturgies. When interviewing pupils they referred to how all were included in the faith development of the school. The quality of teaching is consistently good across the school and this leads to purposeful learning and motivated, interested, and engaged pupils. Pupils are enthusiastic in Religious Education lessons and have mature, positive attitudes to learning. They are becoming religiously literate and many are very articulate and reflective in their oral responses. Children work well in lessons and enjoy the varying teaching and learning styles offered to them. This enhances the Religious Education curriculum and provision provided. Achievement is good throughout the school and all groups of learners, including more able and less able pupils, achieve equally well and demonstrate good quality learning in line with their capabilities.

How effective are leaders and managers in developing the Catholic Life of the school?

Grade 1

The Catholic life and spiritual and moral development in the school is promoted effectively by leaders and managers. Leaders are strongly committed to the Catholic values and principles and these lie at the heart of the school's vision and mission. A commitment to staff training and induction contribute to the strong Catholic ethos. Staff and pupils show a good understanding of what it means to belong to a Catholic school and the importance of contributing to the school community.

The head teacher has a clear vision for the provision for Religious Education at St Gildas School. The committed co-ordinator supports staff well and keeps them informed of developments and trends. She has worked hard to develop procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils and the quality of teaching and learning. These are effective in enabling the school to know its strengths and areas for development. One of the areas identified for improvement is the need for pupils to develop further their skills of self- assessment.

The work of the governing body has helped raise the profile of the school. They are supportive of leaders and staff, and confident and questioning in their role. Relationships with the school community are good as a result of good communication and a clear understanding of their role. They provide an appropriate level of challenge and this enables them to be more effective in shaping the strategy for school development. They are contributing to the development of good relationships between home, school and parish. The head teacher has prepared a review of the school in the light of the diocesan pastoral guidelines to share with the governing body on the Diocesan document "People of Hope".

The school provides a significant range of after school clubs, which are led by staff, outside agencies and parishioners of the parish.

Leaders promote community cohesion well. There is a common sense of belonging in the school and all are welcomed in a spirit of equality and respect. Pupils are developing a heightened awareness of the common good and can articulate and explain the impact of their fundraising activities for agencies such as "CAFOD". Acts of worship respect everyone's spiritual identity and the Religious Education curriculum promotes attitudes of tolerance, respect and justice.

How effective is the provision for Catholic Education?

Grade 2

The quality of teaching in Religious Education is consistently good across the school resulting in good quality learning. Lessons are well planned and the range of pupils' capabilities is taken into account when planning some effective and imaginative activities. A variety of teaching strategies are employed to engage pupils. Good pupil/teacher relations, a range of questioning styles and effective use of ICT enable good levels of motivation and concentration. Teachers' subject knowledge is strong and this contributes to the good progress pupils make across the school. Marking and feedback to pupils does not always identify how they can improve and move on in their learning.

Assessment and academic guidance in Religious Education is satisfactory. Assessment procedures are embedded in the school's systems and the school has a broadly accurate view of pupils' achievement and progress. Assessment, recording and moderation take place regularly and are well documented. Teachers have developed a good level of accuracy in applying the Levels of Attainment. However, although the school can identify what needs to be done to raise standards, pupils are unsure of how well they are doing and how to improve. The development of self -assessment procedures, the setting of targets and the tracking of pupils has been identified by the school as an area to be developed and is included in the Religious Education Action Plan.

The contribution to and promotion of pupils' spiritual and moral development is a strength of the curriculum. Collaboration with other local Catholic schools to develop the Religious Education curriculum contributes to good outcomes for pupils.

The quality of prayer and worship provided by the school is good and improving. Evidence shows a range of different opportunities and styles of worship are provided by the school, engaging and involving pupils, parents and parish. Recently purchased resources and extra funding have resulted in a high quality of books and resources for class and school reflection areas and are used to good effect. Pupils need to be provided with sufficient opportunities to prepare and lead worship independently but a knowledgeable and able staff are well placed to develop pupil skills further.