

St Gildas Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	123857
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	380751
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2012
Lead inspector	Daniel Towl HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	214
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Young
Headteacher	Deborah Evans
Date of previous school inspection	24 September 2008
School address	St Mary Street Yeovil BA21 4BJ
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Age group	4–11
Inspection date(s)	13–14 June 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Daniel Towl

Her Majesty's Inspector

Wendy Marriott

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Fourteen lessons and seven teachers were observed in addition to a range of other school activities. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at assessment data, school documents and policies including the procedures to safeguard pupils. They analysed 25 returned questionnaires from parents and carers as well as those from pupils and staff. Discussions were held with teachers, senior staff, parents, pupils and governors. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.

Information about the school

St Gildas is an average-sized primary school near the centre of Yeovil. About 40% of its pupils come from the local Catholic parish. Increasingly, pupils are admitted 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 average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is also below average. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils leaving and joining the school at different times during the key stages. The school meets the current floor standard, which sets the minimum standards expected by the government. Since the previous inspection there have been several staff changes including the appointment of a new headteacher. The school was recently awarded the Equality Mark.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. In recent years pupils have attained high levels in English and mathematics by the time they leave in Year 6. They make good and sometimes outstanding progress. The school is not outstanding yet because there are some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and pupils' ongoing progress in lessons.
- Pupils achieve well in their key skills in English and mathematics. The school is very successful in supporting pupils who are at most risk of falling behind in their learning, for example those who are disabled or have special educational needs and those who are at the early stages of speaking English as an additional language. The quality of pupils' ongoing work is let down at times by untidy presentation and spelling errors in written work.
- Teaching is good overall, and sometimes outstanding, but it is not consistent across the school. Where it is best, teaching is thorough, confident and clearly focused on raising pupils' skills. In some lessons the management of pupils' tasks does not promote good learning. In Key Stage 1, teaching is least consistent.
- Pupils feel safe at school and their behaviour is good. In whole-school gatherings, such as assembly, behaviour is exemplary. Pupils get on well with each other and school records show that behaviour continues to improve. Pupils say that incidents of any forms of bullying, including racism, are rare and they are dealt with quickly. Some parents and carers commented that the approach to dealing with bullying has improved since the headteacher was appointed.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior leaders give a good sense of purpose to the work of the school. Good procedures are in place to monitor pupils' progress regularly, leading to increasingly accurate assessments of pupils' attainment. Procedures to monitor teaching have been successful in raising its quality, but review procedures are not quick enough to

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support a more rapid improvement and achieve greater consistency. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well managed. The provision for pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language is managed very effectively.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils' ongoing progress is consistently good by:
 - quickening the pace of the monitoring and reviewing of teaching to rapidly secure consistently good or better teaching across the school
 - ensuring that the tasks set for pupils are managed effectively to maximise learning in all lessons
 - improving the consistency and quality of pupils' work by reducing the number of spelling errors and raising the quality of presentation.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires are happy with their children's good progress. Inspection evidence supports this view.

The school has a high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language. Many of them speak little or no English when they start at the school. Most of these pupils make rapid progress in their acquisition of English because they receive high quality, well-targeted support. This enables them to gain quickly enough proficiency in English to be included fully in their class activities. The current group of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs are making satisfactory progress overall. Some make good and accelerated progress, especially where targets and the level of work are well matched to their needs. Those pupils who join at different points in the key stages make equally good progress.

The majority of pupils enter the school with skills expected for their age. Those with little or no English start school with language and communication skills below what would be expected. Children in the Reception class make a good start with their early reading, writing and mathematical understanding, including those who speak English as an additional language. Their achievement is good. From an early age, pupils develop a good grasp of letter sounds and how to combine them to read words. Reading is broadly average by the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, but a higher-than-average proportion of pupils reach the higher levels. Attainment in reading is high by the time pupils leave in Year 6, reflecting continued good progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Pupils write effectively for a wide range of purposes and develop a good knowledge of the different characteristics of a wide range of genres. This reflects the school's recent successful emphasis on developing writing. However, the presentation of

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pupils' writing and attention to accurate spelling are not consistently good. Pupils develop good levels of confidence and achieve well in their understanding of numbers, developing good skills in calculation.

Quality of teaching

Teachers are mostly well prepared and knowledgeable. Where lessons are most effective, and sometimes outstanding, teaching is thorough and precise and underpinned by good subject knowledge. In these lessons teachers make it clear to pupils what is expected of them. The lessons build carefully on pupils' prior knowledge and skills, and learning is made relevant, for example linking mathematics to everyday life, writing about recent experiences on a school visit and, in geography, challenging stereotypes when learning about different cultures. Pupils respond well to this good and outstanding teaching. They willingly engage with their tasks and activities and work together effectively in pairs and small groups. Within these well-structured lessons there are sometimes missed opportunities to allow higher-attaining pupils to make a more independent response to the tasks set. There is an appropriate range of independent and teacher-directed tasks in the Reception class.

There are a few inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Some is only satisfactory. Where this is the case pupils' activities are not well enough thought through or adequately planned. This means that pupils do not make good progress and opportunities are missed to maximise learning. This variability in progress is reflected in a lower quality of work in pupils' books.

The teaching and support for pupils who require additional help are effective and teaching assistants make an important contribution to this aspect of the school's work. A range of strategies is used to support pupils. The outcomes of this additional support are carefully monitored and strategies adapted to suit individual needs. This means that pupils who are most at risk of falling behind learn effectively.

Pupils say they are happy with the amount of information they receive about their progress. Lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to work together and share ideas in an environment where individual contributions are respected. Classrooms have a good climate for learning. This contributes effectively to pupils' moral and social development. It successfully helps them to develop self-esteem. For example, in a discussion with an inspector, a small group of pupils spoke with pride about their favourite pieces of work.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils behave well. They are courteous to each other and to adults. Incidents of poor behaviour have decreased in the last two years and there have been no exclusions this academic year. Pupils share resources and cooperate well when working in pairs and groups and this leads to an atmosphere in classrooms that is conducive to learning. The excellent behaviour in whole-school activities and in the after-school

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extra-curricular activities promotes a strong community spirit in the school. This was exemplified in a school assembly when excellent behaviour and outstanding singing gave the pupil body a strong sense of identity.

Pupils are well briefed about matters of e-safety and conduct themselves safely in lessons and around the school. Where required, teachers point out matters of safety to pupils, for example when they are undertaking practical activities. Attendance is above average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school and the very strong stance that the headteacher takes to reduce extended and unauthorised absences for reasons other than illness. Parents', carers' and pupils' responses in their returned questionnaires were very positive about the school and what it offers. A small group of parents and carers in discussion with inspectors were very pleased with the improvements in behaviour and the headteacher's effective response to the rare incidents of bullying.

Leadership and management

The school's good performance has been sustained since the previous inspection. The new headteacher has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Procedures to monitor pupils' progress are thorough and usefully involve senior leaders and class teachers. Senior leaders are very aware of the different groups of pupils and how they are performing. Strategies to support pupils who are most at risk of falling behind are successful. These pupils broadly match or surpass the performance of similar groups nationally. A programme of professional development has had a positive impact on the teaching of writing and developing teachers' skills in assessing pupils' progress. Teachers new to the profession have been helped gain confidence in the classroom and in taking on roles in the school improvement programme. Teaching is regularly monitored and areas for improvement are identified and acted upon. However, the review cycle is not yet rapid enough to improve teaching quickly where it is not yet consistently good.

The leadership team has clear roles and responsibilities. Its roles, related to pupils' achievements, teaching quality and the coordination of staff teams, are key to the monitoring and future development of the school's overall performance. The current team provides a very secure base from which to take the school forward.

Parents and carers welcome the accessibility of the headteacher and staff when they have concerns about their children. The presence around the school and personal involvement of the headteacher in school matters are seen by parents and carers as key drivers in school improvement, especially behaviour, and the development of the ethos of the school community. They correctly believe that the headteacher is 'in touch' with what is going on.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and suitably focused on developing key skills. It is meeting the needs of pupils. A focus on writing has successfully improved pupils' skills in this area of their learning. A Christian ethos strongly underpins the school community, but pupils of all faiths and backgrounds are equally well supported and

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helped to succeed. This exemplifies the school's effectiveness in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. The wide range of extra-curricular activities is very well attended and adds a very positive dimension to the school community.

Governors fulfil their statutory role and the requirements for safeguarding and child protection are met.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



15 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gildas Catholic Primary School, Yeovil, BA 21 4BJ

My colleague and I enjoyed our visit to your school. It is a good school because you are learning well and making good progress most of the time. You are courteous, well behaved and have good attitudes in class. We could see that you get on well with each other and work hard. Your behaviour and singing in assembly were outstanding.

Those of you who are new to learning English are doing well. Your teachers and teaching assistants give you good support and you are making good progress. You are all developing good skills in reading, writing and mathematics. It was good to see so many of you taking part in the clubs after school.

While most of your lessons are good, sometimes teachers are not planning carefully enough to make sure that all the tasks you do are helping you to make good progress. Your headteacher and senior teachers already check the quality of your lessons, but we have asked them to make any improvements needed more quickly to ensure that you always make good progress.

You can help to improve your achievements by ensuring that you always complete your work carefully and neatly, and by making sure that your spelling is as accurate as possible.

I hope that you continue to enjoy school.

Yours sincerely

Daniel Towl
Her Majesty's Inspector

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