

Inspection of St Gildas Catholic Primary School

Mary Street, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 4EG

Inspection dates:	24 and 25 September 2024
The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The co-headteachers of this school are Juliet Cahill and Alison Setter. This school is part of The Dunstan Catholic Educational Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Helen Taylor, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Catherine Christie.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Gildas belong to a warm and diverse community. Many pupils join the school at different times of the school year. The school works effectively with families to help pupils settle quickly. The many pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported. The support for pupils' well-being is a strength of the school and professional relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Pupils like their school because they have lots of friends. They say that other pupils are kind and that bullying is extremely rare.

The school's curriculum is undergoing significant change. The majority of this work is very new. The school is refining curriculum plans and the ways in which staff need to deliver them. Currently, pupils do not learn effectively across year groups and subjects. The curriculum in Reception is more established. The school ensures that the youngest children are happy and enjoy their learning.

Pupils have a secure understanding of the school's values, such as resilience and stewardship. They demonstrate this through their respectful and polite behaviour. Pupils can take part in a range of extra-curricular activities, including within sports, art and drama. Many pupils enjoy educational trips, such as to places of worship.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The school's curriculum is more developed in some areas than in others. For example, the school's phonics programme is well established. Pupils read books matched to the sounds they know. Staff have received appropriate training to deliver this with confidence. This means that children in Reception, and other pupils who need to catch up, do so effectively. This includes pupils who speak English as an additional language and older pupils who require additional support.

Most other subjects are not well developed. The school has not set out precisely what pupils need to know and in which order. They have not broken down knowledge sufficiently. In addition, they have not provided clarity on which resources teachers should use to support effective learning. Learning activities do not securely ensure pupils learn what is intended. As a result, pupils' learning experiences are too variable.

The school has not established effective ways to check pupils' understanding. As a result, when new content is introduced younger pupils, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), can flounder. Learning is not always adapted to support these pupils to work with increasing independence. Nevertheless, the school accurately identifies pupils with SEND. It works effectively with external agencies to secure additional support for these pupils, when needed.

The early years foundation stage curriculum is well designed. The school is tenacious in identifying barriers to children's learning, such as for those who speak English as an additional language, and putting effective practices in place to support these children. For

example, children often use signs to help them communicate their needs. The sequence of topics helps to build on children's knowledge over time.

The school has identified areas to improve across all curriculum subjects. However, its analysis of information, including checks on the quality of education and the progress of pupils with SEND, is in its infancy. The trust has begun to support the school by training subject leaders, but this work is also very new. Staff and leadership changes have inevitably posed challenges. Currently, the school's evaluation of its work lacks the detail needed for the local governing committee to provide challenge and support effectively.

The development of children's language and communication skills underpins the early years foundation stage curriculum. The interactions between staff and children effectively teach children new vocabulary. Staff help them to build positive relationships with one another. Children in Reception enjoy listening to stories and using their learning in other areas of the provision. Children in Reception play and learn harmoniously and with purpose.

Older pupils also develop a love of reading. The books which pupils read help to develop pupils' understanding of a range of pertinent issues, such as racism. Pupils enjoy talking about the books they read with their teachers and all pupils have opportunities to meet visiting authors. Pupils enjoy learning about other religions and cultures alongside the school's own religious character. They develop a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including online.

Pupils, including children in Reception, behave well. The school is calm and orderly. Expectations about how pupils should behave at different times of the school day are clear. On occasions where pupils are not engaged in their learning, this is often due to weaker curriculum practices.

The trust has supported the school by appointing two interim headteachers. There are appropriate plans in place to strengthen leadership at all levels. It is currently too early to measure the impact of this work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum does not outline the small steps of knowledge that all pupils need to learn with enough precision. This means that there is too much variability in the way teachers implement the curriculum. The trust must provide clarity about what pupils need to learn and when, so that all pupils can learn effectively.

- The school does not use the checks on pupils' learning effectively to identify gaps in their knowledge. This hinders teachers' ability to address pupils' misconceptions or pick up on any missed learning. The trust must support teachers to use appropriate strategies to check that all pupils, including those with SEND, have secured their learning and are ready to move on.
- There have been significant changes to the curriculum recently. The school has not sufficiently supported staff members who are responsible for making these changes. As a result, it has not ensured that teaching staff deliver the curriculum as intended, and it is unable to evaluate its impact accurately. The trust must ensure that leaders at all levels have the training to monitor the impact of their work and address staff development needs robustly.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	148952
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10344864
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Catherine Christie
CEO of the trust	Helen Taylor
Headteacher	Juliet Cahill and Alison Setter (Joint Interim Headteachers)
Website	www.stgildasprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Gildas Catholic Primary School became an academy in March 2022. When its predecessor school, St Gildas Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- The school has undergone significant changes in leadership. There are currently two interim headteachers who have been in post since September 2024.
- The school has a Catholic religious character. The school is in the Diocese of Clifton. At the most recent section 48 inspection of the school by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate, carried out in July 2024, the school was judged to be good.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school has a higher-than-average number of pupils who speak English as an additional language and a higher-than-average number of pupils who join the school during the year.
- The school runs its own 'early drop off' club.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- An inspector also looked at the wider curriculum in science and geography.
- Inspectors analysed 11 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the responses of staff to Ofsted's online survey.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils during lessons and social times. They met with staff who oversee the personal development and behaviour of pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and discussed how they identify and support pupils with SEND.
- As well as meeting with the two interim headteachers, the lead inspector met with two members of the governing committee, the CEO of The Dunstan Catholic Educational Trust and two members of the board of trustees.

Inspection team

Victoria Griffin, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Neil Lankester

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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