

# St Gildas Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123857
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	314742
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Deborah Zachary

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	209
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	30
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Colin Young
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jane Cottrell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 May 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Mary Street Yeovil BA21 4BJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01935 423630
<b>Fax number</b>	01935 411048

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	24 September 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	314742

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following:

how quickly children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) make progress

how well the school meets the needs of the pupils who speak English as an additional language, especially in the EYFS and Key Stage 1

the nature and impact of the school's recent focus on improving standards in writing.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with staff, pupils and governors, analysis of school data on pupils' progress, examination of pupils' work, study of documentation, observations of lessons, assembly and playtime, and study of questionnaires returned by parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

St Gildas is located in the centre of the town and draws its pupils from a wide area. The majority of the pupils are of White British ethnicity, but a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds are also represented at the school. The largest minority ethnic group is comprised of children from Indian backgrounds. Some 27% of the pupils, a rising proportion, speak English as an additional language, and often arrive at the school at an early stage of acquiring the language. A comparatively low proportion of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

The teacher for the EYFS took up her post only three weeks before the inspection.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Gildas is a good school. Pupils achieve well and are happy. Parents are highly satisfied and very positive, one describing the school as having 'a lovely atmosphere of openness and friendliness'. The school is certainly a cohesive community, and it teaches the pupils to feel part of the town and world community. As the headteacher and a governor separately commented, pupils are taught that they should love their neighbour, and they are taught that the definition of a neighbour is very wide.

The pupils' good personal development is reflected in their good behaviour and their courtesy. Pupils of all ages play together well and have a good knowledge of how to stay healthy, particularly through exercise. They feel their views are valued by staff. As one said, 'School is cool because of all the adults: you can express yourself.' They are aware of how well they are doing and how to improve. One Year 2 pupil neatly summed up the good use of targets by saying they help you to 'do something you can't normally do'. Pupils and teachers often referred to targets in Key Stage 1 literacy lessons during the inspection.

Leadership and management are good, and appropriate steps have been taken to widen the responsibilities of middle managers and the deputy head. The headteacher provides very effective and sensitive leadership, and has made a significant impact since her arrival just before the last inspection. Development of the accommodation has been very innovative and the curriculum greatly improved: pupils much enjoy the wide range of activities they are offered. Progress in reading is outstanding in some year groups. As a result of a close focus on mathematics, progress in this subject has rapidly improved since 2005 and is now good. The school has a good capacity to improve further. It has rightly identified that progress in writing is now slower than in other subjects. Progress in writing is steady in the EYFS and in Key Stage 1, but in the last couple of years it has slowed in Years 3 to 5, particularly for pupils who should be reaching levels above those expected for their age. Last year, progress in writing accelerated greatly in Year 6. As in previous years, Year 6 pupils who have just left the school reached above average standards in English, mathematics and science.

The school is introducing a well planned range of strategies to improve progress in writing, but it is too early to see any impact for most pupils. Those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are at early stages of acquiring English are closely monitored through regular reviews of their well structured, short term individual education plans. Both groups make at least good progress. Some speakers of English as an additional language make exceptional progress in their language acquisition. They are carefully assessed on entry to the school and their support is meticulously planned and monitored.

Teaching and learning are usually good, but pupils' progress in writing suggests that learning is not always sufficiently rapid. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and provide well-structured lessons. In literacy in Key Stage 1, pupils are grouped carefully so that they are with others who are at the same stage of learning. Teachers and teaching assistants then focus very closely on the next things they should learn, and so the pupils' needs are met very well. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to learning throughout the school. Teaching is monitored, and the headteacher is aware that there is some variation in the quality of teaching between different year groups. Records of observations are detailed, but there is no systematic identification and follow-up of areas to improve. This makes it harder to provide support and evaluate the ongoing effect of strategies aimed at improving provision, for example in writing.

Having said that, the plans to improve writing do outline the intention to make early and frequent observations of teaching quality, to check on the impact of the changing writing curriculum.

Governance is good. Although a significant number of governors have recently been appointed, the chair and governing body provide challenge and meet statutory requirements, including those for the safeguarding of pupils. The pupils feel secure and well looked after. As one Year 2 pupil commented, the adults make sure they 'feel all nice and cosy inside'.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The EYFS is well managed by the Key Stage 1/EYFS leader, and this is enabling a consistent approach to be developed for children as they move through the first stages of school. In recent years significant numbers have entered the school with attainment below that expected, but standards have improved to become closer to average before the children enter Year 1. In the current Reception class, the children are being well taught and they are quickly gaining independence. They are safe and happy. They have a wide range of well planned activities that are helping them to develop the skills they need. The children who speak English as an additional language are well supported. The outside area is used appropriately, but more strenuous activity is limited by its size and it is not yet as inviting as the indoor classroom. Communication with parents is good.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve progress in writing, particularly for higher attaining pupils in Years 3 to 5, and for those in the current Year 6 who have lost ground earlier in the key stage.
- Improve the monitoring and support of teaching so that teaching becomes more consistently good.



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

<sup>1</sup>Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No



**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

25 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gildas Catholic Primary School, Yeovil BA21 4BJ

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. Particular thanks to those of you who talked to us about the school. We think you are getting a good education at St Gildas. We saw that you behave well and you told us how much you enjoy school, and how you particularly like the teachers. You are well taught and you are making good progress, especially in your mathematics and reading. We were pleased that you are learning to help the school, for example through the school council, and to help other people through your charity work. You are all well looked after, and the youngest children are helped to settle well in Reception.

The headteacher is leading the school very well and she knows exactly what needs to be done to make it even better. We are asking the school to do these things:

- Make sure that you improve your writing a bit more quickly, particularly in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. You can help by working really hard at this.
- Make teaching even better, by more systematically checking on how well teachers are teaching and how their lessons are improving.

We wish you all the best for the future

Deborah Zachary Lead inspector