

St Gildas' RC Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102151
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	323593
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Malcolm Johnstone

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Sarah Price
Headteacher	Mrs Irene Rincon
Date of previous school inspection	15 June 2006
School address	Oakington Way London N8 9EP
Telephone number	020 8348 1902
Fax number	020 8340 7805

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is similar in size to most other junior schools. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average. There is a wide variety of minority ethnic groups represented. The largest of these ethnic groups are of European, Black British Caribbean and Black British African heritage. A small minority of these pupils are at the early stages of English language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including pupils with a statement of special educational need is above average. Their main areas of need relate to moderate or severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The school has gained a number of awards, including the International Schools Award in 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. This view is shared by most parents, and one reflected this when writing, 'We are absolutely delighted with the school: they have been wonderful about demanding the best of our child while being very understanding.' Outstanding leadership and management underpin all that the school achieves. The headteacher and senior leaders are excellent role models in their commitment to meeting the needs of all pupils. There is outstanding teamwork and an insistence on high standards. Self-evaluation, involving all senior leaders, is excellent and is grounded in incisive monitoring of teaching, learning and data analysis. This has given the school a clear indication of what is working well and what can still be improved. The school has a good record of success over a number of years and has improved well since the previous inspection. These strengths give the school excellent capacity for ongoing improvement.

Most pupils enter school with above average standards, although there is a full range of ability present. Achievement is outstanding and most pupils make rapid progress, whatever their backgrounds or abilities. Overall standards are well above average. They are exceptionally high in English and science and above average in mathematics. Despite this excellent overall picture, senior leaders recognise that more could be done to raise standards in mathematics to the very high level of those in English and science.

Pupils' high standards and outstanding achievement are the result of excellent teaching, particularly towards the end of the key stage. All teachers have excellent relationships with the pupils and high expectations of their behaviour and work ethic. Pupils respond well, and as a consequence, their behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. They enjoy learning and are keen to succeed in all that they do. Good assessment ensures that work is matched well to pupils' different needs. Marking is exemplary in English and gives pupils clear indications of how their work might be improved. There is scope to extend this approach to make marking consistently good in all subjects.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. Racial harmony is very strong and pupils respect the values and beliefs of others. These factors contribute markedly to the well above average standards pupils attain and to their achievements across an excellent curriculum. Pupils develop into confident and articulate individuals who are prepared extremely well for the next stage of their education. They have a very well developed understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. Care, support and guidance are excellent. All adults working in the school are exceptionally good at building pupils' trust and confidence. There is outstanding provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for the minority ethnic pupils at the early stages of English language acquisition. The promotion of community cohesion is excellent. The school is at the heart of its increasingly diverse community and pupils' learning has both a national and international dimension.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the above average standards in mathematics to bring them more in line with the exceptionally high standards in English and science.
- Ensure that the marking of pupils' work in subjects other than English shows them more consistently how they might improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The school's performance in the 2008 national tests at the end of Year 6 was above the national average in mathematics and exceptionally high in English and science. Pupils' current standards largely reflect this position, Pupils reach challenging targets and an above average proportion of pupils reach the highest available Level 5. Although standards in mathematics are not as high as those in English and science, a consistent approach to the teaching of investigative approaches in mathematics is beginning to have an impact and more pupils are now reaching the higher levels. Standards are exceptionally high in reading and in speaking and listening. Pupils reach well above average standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and there is some high-quality work on display around the school in art, writing and history. Pupils make exceptionally good progress as they move through the school and overall achievement is outstanding. Excellent provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them to make rapid progress. The same is true of the pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds who receive additional support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils are confident, articulate and show high levels of self-esteem. They enjoy school a great deal and talk enthusiastically about all that it has to offer. Almost all have excellent attitudes to learning and their behaviour is exemplary. The few pupils, who on occasions fall below these high standards, receive excellent and successful support from both the highly skilled special needs coordinator and the learning mentor. Pupils take their learning very seriously and are keen to participate. Hands shoot up in the air in all class discussions. They take responsibility for their own learning as well as helping each other when working in groups. They have an excellent knowledge of how to keep healthy and safe. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sport. They have an impressive understanding of different faiths and cultures. This is developed through assemblies and subjects such as religious education, history, geography and art. Older pupils develop social and personal skills very well through residential visits and by acting as school monitors and supporting younger pupils. All pupils have the opportunity to contribute to school council decisions and to stand for election. Pupils make an excellent contribution to a variety of charities. Attendance is above the national average and pupils are punctual.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is consistently good and very often outstanding. Pupils learn very well and are helped by the school's supportive ethos to make excellent progress. Pupils show high levels of engagement and take part enthusiastically in their learning. This is because teachers use assessment information very effectively to provide work that matches their abilities. Highly effective use of resources, including excellent use of ICT, adds to pupils' enjoyment of learning and aids their understanding. Most teachers have excellent subject knowledge and this helps them to explain work very clearly, ask challenging questions and develop the correct subject vocabulary. Teachers consistently convey their high level of expectation and pupils respond

positively. All teachers, including the most skilled, are keen to improve and are always looking for ways that this can be achieved. Highly effective and well-trained teaching assistants give excellent support to those pupils who need extra help. Marking of pupils' work in subjects other than English is up to date and includes positive comments. However, there are not enough comments that show pupils how their work might be improved.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils extremely well. Planning is thorough and detailed and ensures outstanding provision across all subjects, including personal, social and health education. There is a strong focus on curriculum enrichment. The use of specialist teachers in music, art, drama, dance, sports and ICT is highly effective and contributes very well to pupils' achievements and enjoyment of school. Pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT are used extremely well to support learning in other subjects. Pupils participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities; including sports competitions, music and drama events such as in a production of *The Wizard of Oz*. The curriculum is further enhanced by a very good range of visits to local museums and galleries. Visitors contribute extremely well to pupils' knowledge of other cultures. For example, a cotton farmer supported a topic on fair trade and a headteacher from a link school in Ghana visited to talk about her school and community. At the same time, a teacher from St Gildas' school visited the school in Ghana.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All the staff have an outstanding commitment to the care, guidance and support of the pupils. As a result, pupils feel very well supported and say that there is always someone to listen and help if they ever have a problem. Almost all parents agree. As one parent said, 'My child loves going to school and I know he is well cared for and safe.' There are good arrangements for regular risk assessments and appropriate child protection procedures. Vulnerable pupils are supported extremely well by the learning mentor and special educational needs coordinator. The tracking of pupils' progress is excellent and pupils are encouraged to assess their progress against good literacy and numeracy targets that are specific to their own learning. These are helping them to see how they might improve their work in the future and contribute to the excellent overall progress they make.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The well-established and highly respected headteacher, ably supported by the leadership team and subject coordinators, provides excellent leadership. She communicates her drive for high standards and achievement very clearly and sets challenging targets. This has ensured that pupils consistently reach high standards and make rapid progress. Teachers and classroom assistants are clear about their roles and responsibilities, and work together as a very effective team with shared accountability. The role of the subject coordinators has improved since the previous inspection. They are firmly focused on improving standards and work effectively to ensure all pupils make the progress they should. The coordinator for mathematics is working successfully to ensure mathematical investigational work is developed consistently from year to year. Self-evaluation is excellent and well founded on comprehensive tracking systems,

target-setting and monitoring procedures. Governance is good. The governors act as critical friends and question the senior leaders about aspects of the school's performance. They have good knowledge of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. The office staff, caretaker and cleaning staff ensure that the school runs efficiently and are clearly an integral part of the St Gildas' 'family'.

There is a clear understanding of what is needed to promote community cohesion, including a detailed analysis of the school's context and evaluation of the impact of its efforts. There is a high level of involvement and engagement with all groups of parents in the community. Pupils have produced excellent work showing good understanding of recycling and environmental issues in the locality. Projects such as the fairtrade topic and a project which involved pupils in raising money for wells in Zimbabwe add an international perspective to their learning. Links with schools in Ghana and Italy further promote pupils' understanding of how other people live and any problems they might face. There are good relationships with parents and almost all who responded to the inspection questionnaire are happy with all that the school achieves. A few would appreciate an additional opportunity to have a formal interview with their child's teacher. The school has already made plans to meet this suggestion.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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**

06 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Gildas' RC Junior School, London, N8 9EP

I am writing to tell you what we found on our recent visit to your school. We found that your school is outstanding. You were very polite and we really enjoyed talking to you about all the exciting things that happen. You say that you like school and that your lessons are enjoyable and interesting. We agree with you because we also enjoyed being in the lessons. Your headteacher and all the adults who work in school care very much about you. They work very hard to make sure that all of you do the best that you can. We were impressed by how much you know about keeping safe and eating healthy foods. You told us that there is always an adult to help you if you are worried about anything.

We were most impressed by how well you behave and how good you are at making friends and getting on with each other. It is clear that you always try to do your best in lessons and are most keen to take part in all the exciting extra things that happen in school. We would like to thank the school council for the excellent discussion we had and for telling us about all the things that you like about school and a few things you think could be improved. You are certainly listened to by the teachers and your suggestion for more playground resources has been successful.

You do well in all subjects, particularly English, science and information and communication technology. Although your work in mathematics is good, you could do even better and we have asked your teachers to help you achieve this. When teachers mark your work in English, they write useful comments that explain how it can be improved. We have asked them to do this more in other subjects.

We know that all of you will continue to work hard and make the school and your parents even more proud of you.

Good luck in the future.

Yours faithfully

Malcolm Johnstone

Lead Inspector