



St Gildas Catholic Primary School

URN: 148952

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Clifton

03–04 July 2024

Summary of key findings

Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

2

Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

2

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

2

What the school does well

- Guided by the school mission statement, 'Where learning and God are one', there is a lived sense of community where everyone is welcomed in a spirit of generous hospitality and where the school's rich diversity of languages and cultures are celebrated.
- Relationships in the school community are positive and highly effective. The entire community benefits from excellent collaboration with the local parish, the Dunstan Catholic Education Trust, and the diocese. Strong partnerships between staff, parents and governors champion the interest of all pupils.
- Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons, demonstrating positive engagement and enthusiasm for their learning. They can recognise connections between religion, scripture and their own lives.

- The dynamic relationship between the school and parish makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' experience of prayer and liturgy.
- The proactive and enthusiastic chaplaincy team make a valued contribution to the Catholic life of the school, taking a lead in a range of charity and spiritual initiatives.

What the school needs to improve

- Develop teachers' subject knowledge and skill in understanding how pupils learn in RE, appropriate to the phase in which they are teaching.
- Develop and monitor teachers' use of assessment to identify pupils' starting points, adapt planning and assess new learning, so that each pupil makes good progress.
- Develop staff confidence and skills in promoting the prayer life of the school, so that they can confidently empower pupils to take a more active and independent part in this.

Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

2

2

Pupils enjoy being part of this happy and inclusive community. They express pride in their school mission statement, 'Where learning and God are one', and can explain how the Dunstan Catholic Education Trust values guide them to become role models in all aspects of school life. Pupils feel safe, valued with a sense of self-worth, and demonstrate respect and care for others. Pupils have a good understanding of Catholic social teaching, stating 'even if we do a little thing, it can change the world and make a better community'. They enthusiastically respond to its demands by raising money for charities such as CAFOD and Missio, supporting the Lord's Larder foodbank, as well as singing at local residential homes. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school mission and values, with one parent describing how her child was 'discovering and deciding her own faith journey' as a result. Behaviour is good and pupils demonstrate a respect and curiosity to learn more about other faiths, cultures and languages which make up their 'special school family'. Guided by the headteacher, the newly re-established chaplaincy team are enthusiastic and pro-active. They make a valued contribution with their introduction of prayer buckets at lunchtime and working towards the 'Live Simply' award.

Driven by leaders, the Trust and governors, the Catholic life and mission of the school is securely rooted in its commitment to Gospel values and church teaching. Staff are fully committed to modelling these values within the community, describing the mission as 'an underlying kindness' in all parts of school life. The sense of belonging is a considerable strength of the school, evident in the quality of positive relationships and culture of welcome; celebrating a diverse range of faith, culture and languages. One pupil expressed, 'we come here to develop our special community and become a good example of how to respect each other'. Staff know their families' particular needs very well and commitment to supporting the most vulnerable is commendable.

This is demonstrated by the family support worker, staff trained in emotional literacy and Theraplay, in addition to support group sessions for parents. The school environment reflects its Catholic identity but not always in a vibrant way. However, leaders have plans in place to ensure that displays reflect and celebrate their diverse community. Provision for personal, social, health and relationships education are in line with Trust policy and procedure, ensuring all statutory and diocesan requirements are met and valued by parents and pupils. Leaders have monitored provision and seek to review the curriculum coverage.

Leaders and governors are committed to the Catholic life and mission of the school. They are well informed and conscientious in their role and value the ongoing support and challenge from the Trust. Good use is made of diocesan training opportunities and resources to support leaders, teachers and governors. The school benefits from a flourishing partnership with the local parish and priest, which considerably enriches the Catholic identity and spirituality within the school. Parents are valued as their children's first educators, with leaders actively seeking to engage and work in partnership in its mission. Catholic social teaching principles are well known by the community, and leaders have plans to develop further connections within the broader curriculum. Governors are proud of their school, giving generously of their time, and monitoring enables them to possess a clear evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for development. Evaluation is also informed by parental and pupil voice and chaplains are trained to monitor elements of the school's Catholic identity such as quality of prayer tables. Staff feel well supported with induction, ongoing training and pastoral care, from the Trust, Diocese or in-house.

Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

Religious education key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

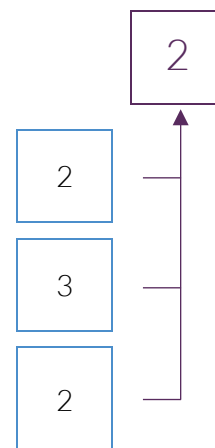
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

Provision

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils achieve well in relation to age and phase expectations. Whilst there is some variation across year groups, pupils engage well, and can demonstrate good knowledge and understanding of scripture and can make links with the church teaching and everyday life. In the best cases, children are able to express a deeper understanding due to good teacher knowledge informing careful and challenging questioning. From the earliest stage, pupils are developing confidence in remembering previous learning, religious vocabulary and key concepts. Many pupils enjoy their learning in religious education, particularly Bible stories, studying scripture and participating in creative activities such as artwork and drama. Pupils enjoy learning about other faiths, and visiting the local mosque, seeing it as an important part of learning about their own diverse community. A considerable drive to raise standards in the quality of work in books demonstrates some examples of effective 'big writes' as well as creativity, but presentation can be erratic at times. Whilst pupils are familiar with the school's marking policy and 'toolkit' of learning, they are not always clear about how well they are doing and what they need to do next. Consequently, pupils' self-assessment is inconsistent.

Teachers are committed to religious education and are gaining confidence due to ongoing focused training from leaders and the diocese. Where teachers have a stronger subject knowledge and experience of pedagogy, children achieve well in religious education. Teachers communicate high expectations and create a positive and respectful learning environment. In the best examples, teachers are enthusiastic and confident; offering clear expectations and scaffolding learning so that pupils make good progress. Older children are suitably challenged to make links between appropriate scripture and the sacraments. Effective teacher questioning and quality resources enables pupils to make insightful statements about sacraments and images in art, reflecting opportunities for moral and spiritual development. However, this is not

yet consistent across the school. Planning is detailed and in line with age related expectations but needs to be more informed by identifying pupil starting points in order to ensure new learning. Whilst pupils' efforts are celebrated, teachers' feedback doesn't always make a difference to pupils' understanding of how to move on in their learning. A range of good quality books and online resources are used. These, alongside regular visits from the parish priest, parishioners and staff speakers are effective in enriching pupils' learning experience.

Leaders and governors maintain religious education at the heart of the curriculum. They ensure that the taught curriculum is in line with the *Religious Education Directory* (RED) requirements and parity of expectations with other core subjects. In its pilot year, staff trialling the new units of work speak enthusiastically about its content and feel well supported by diocesan training. The new subject leader is committed to her role and is able to articulate a vision for religious education and next steps, supported by the headteacher. Leaders benefit from ongoing work with the diocese as well as links with the religious education leaders' network in the Trust. All diocesan training has been accessed, as well as bespoke support from the religious education adviser, in house from leaders or parish priest. However, ongoing professional development remains a priority. Leaders understand the importance of monitoring and evaluation, with systems in place to monitor the quality of religious education in school. Activities have included lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and planning and pupil voice. The link governor for religious education undertakes learning walks, book looks and reports back to the local governing body regularly.

Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

Collective worship key judgement grade

Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

2

Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

2

Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

2

2

This is a school which loves to sing in worship, with pupils enjoying prayer and liturgy experiences in both school and church. Pupils learn to be still and reflective, readily joining in communal prayer from the earliest stages. This is reflected in one pupil stating, 'You don't always need a luxury place or a reflection table, just quiet'. Pupils have a good understanding of the feasts and colours representing the Liturgical year and the prayers associated with the seasons, such as stations of the cross in Lent and the rosary for Marian months. Leaders and the parish priest act as positive role models for staff in leading liturgy. Staff are committed to leading prayer although some lack confidence in doing so. Whilst leaders recognise that pupil-led worship is still in the early stages, they have ensured that staff have benefitted from diocesan training and resources, so that staff and pupils are familiar with the four-part approach and are respectful and supportive of their peers. The school is starting to articulate how collective worship both reflects and can also impact on events in school life as well as the national and global community.

Liturgy and prayer are central to the life of the school and the daily pattern of prayer is familiar and embraced by the whole community. Scripture appropriate to the season is well chosen and supported with quality worship resources from Cafod, Missio Together and diocesan frameworks. A parishioner regularly leads a 'pre-Gospel' group where pupils enthusiastically choose to gather and explore the meaning of the upcoming Sunday gospel. Leaders are committed and model active participation in collective worship. Staff have received training on helping pupils to lead and plan liturgy, but this should remain an ongoing focus. Allocated outdoor space is being used by pupil chaplains as an area to lead reflection and prayer activities to good effect. However, this and other spaces should be developed further. The school is exceptionally well supported by the parish priest and parishioners, including staff parishioners, who lead the Rosary clubs, support hymn practice and come to speak about their own faith experience such as working for Saint Vincent de Paul society or going on pilgrimage to Lourdes.

There is a flourishing partnership between the school, parents and the parish which helps pupils to participate in worship more fully, with one parent stating, 'I am very happy with how my son is in school and at home, instigating our evening prayers.... and reflecting about his learning in our lives.'

The liturgical year is marked with a range of Masses, liturgies and prayer opportunities, including reconciliation during Lent and Advent. Year groups regularly attend Mass in the church with the parish, in addition to whole school Masses marking Holy Days of Obligation in school. Every month, the parish hold a child-oriented weekend Mass to further welcome families. The priest supports staff and pupils in their understanding of the scripture and symbolism associated with the sacraments as well as exploring the parts of the Mass. The support provided by priest and parishioners is a valuable asset to the school and a model of excellent practice to be celebrated. Leaders have delivered staff training on prayer as part of the Catholic tradition and help chaplains and all pupils to lead and plan liturgy. However, reflected in staff's own feedback, leaders recognise the need for further development on spirituality as prayer opportunities do not always reflect the depth, richness and creativity of experience available. Leaders, chaplains and the religious education link governor engage in a series of monitoring activities to inform judgements which are reflected in the school's detailed self-evaluation.

Information about the school

Full name of school	St Gilda's Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	148952
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	9333487
Full postal address of the school	St Gilda's Catholic Primary School, Mary Street, Yeovil, BA21 4EG
School phone number	01935423630
Headteacher	Alison Frost
Chair of Local Governing Body	Martin Twist
School Website	www.stgildasprimary.co.uk
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	The Dunstan Catholic Educational Trust
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Academy
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	15/06/17
Previous denominational inspection grade	Good

The inspection team

Rita McLoughlin
Anne Barrett

Lead
Team

Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement

