

St Gildas' Catholic Junior School

Oakington Way, London N8 9EP

Date of inspection by Westminster Diocese: 9 June 2022



Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

A. Classroom religious education is good

- A good, customised and varied religious education curriculum is offered.
- The curriculum ensures progression and development is structured.
- Most pupils make good progress in their knowledge of the Catholic faith; religious literacy is well developed.
- Attainment is as good as in other core subjects.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive.
- St. Gildas' School participates in effective internal and external moderation on a regular basis.
- Teaching is never less than consistently good.
- Teaching is effective in ensuring pupils are engaged in their learning.
- The contribution of religious education to the Catholic life of the school is strong; its influence permeates all aspects of the learning environment.
- Governors are actively involved with strategic purpose in the support of religious education.

Classroom religious education is not yet outstanding because

- High-quality in-class discussion is not always consolidated by planned tasks that promote learning at a deeper level.

B. The Catholic life of the school is good

- The quality of Catholic education is good, providing pupils with a good range of opportunities to experience a Catholic way of living.
- Resources and accommodation are good.
- Prayer and worship are regular and central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic institution.
- St. Gildas' School promotes strong links with parents, diocese and parish.
- Respect of the individual is central to the school's way of being; the gifts of others are recognised and celebrated.
- Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the Common Good and its theological foundation.
- Leaders encourage staff and pupils to have an understanding of the distinctiveness of this Catholic school.
- Governors share in the strategic leadership of religious education with energy and enthusiasm.

The Catholic life of the school is not yet outstanding because

- Opportunities for pupil leadership are not yet embedded to become daily practice in school.
- Opportunities for vibrant and engaging worship and prayer that ensure prayer life is sufficiently deepened and developed are not yet embedded.

A. Classroom Religious Education

What has improved since the last inspection?

The last inspection recommended that St Gildas' Catholic Primary School continue to develop the skills and confidence of teachers to moderate levels of attainment in religious education and improve and develop moderation skills, as well as tracking the levels of attainment more accurately and closing the gaps in attainment towards the higher levels by the end of Key Stage 2. The school has made good progress towards using moderation both internally and externally. Inspectors observed examples of moderated work at school level as well as at deanery level. As levels of attainment have been replaced by a new standards document, the school has been successful in developing pupils to work at greater than expected levels.

The content of classroom religious education is good

The curriculum directory forms the basis of the content for religious education in St. Gildas'. Leaders ensure that this includes the study of Judaism and Islam at age-appropriate levels. Teachers plan creative lessons and have customised the scheme used to make learning engaging for pupils. Bibles are used effectively, and lessons are scripture based. Resources are well made and ensure pupil engagement. Leaders have ensured the content of RE is structured to ensure progression. There is development of content at a deeper level orally in class, however tasks in books do not always enable pupils to express the depth of their knowledge.

Pupil achievement in religious education is good

Pupil achievement is good when measured against the school's own internal systems. The school is using levels of attainment and no pupils are working at higher levels, however as the school is beginning to consider progress against the new diocesan 'Standards Document', there is evidence that some pupils are working at above expected standard. Attainment is generally as good as in other core subjects; pupils have a positive attitude to learning and this impacts favourably on the progress they make. Support staff are very well briefed and the contributions they make help pupils make good progress. Teachers have sound subject knowledge; pupils' religious literacy is good, and they are confident in their use of religious language. Inspectors observed teachers acting as genuine witnesses as they explained to pupils 'the part that really resonates for me is...'. This contributes to the eagerness of pupils to respond appropriately and make good progress. In a Year 3 lesson observed, skilful questioning was used. The teacher provided respectful response time to engage pupils reflecting on Rembrandt's 'Prodigal Son'. This resulted in high quality discussion about the parable. Inspectors looked at religious education books and observed variety and creativity; curriculum coverage is clear and detailed marking helps pupils to know what to do next. There is a good mix of short and long writing tasks.

The quality of teaching is good

Teaching is consistently good and results in most pupils making good progress and achieving well over time. Teachers have high expectations, inspectors observed lessons in which teachers' strong subject knowledge created a climate where pupils were eager to contribute to good class discussion. There is a positive climate for learning in lessons and pupils are interested, engaged and eager to do well. Effective teaching strategies were observed, teachers used 'pair and share' techniques, quickfire questions and led pacy sessions. In a Year 5 lesson, inspectors observed how sound teacher subject

knowledge engaged pupils and provided a learning environment where pupils had autonomy. Pupils were eager to pose challenging questions of each other and of the teacher. High quality class discussion was a strength of this lesson; however the tasks do not always provide an opportunity for the depth of pupils' religious knowledge to be expressed. In some year groups feedback is better developed and contributes well to pupils' understanding of what they must do to improve. In a Year 6 lesson observed, it was clear that the teacher had thought creatively about imparting an understanding of the Sacrament of the Sick to help pupils make links to their own experiences. Feedback was constructive and detailed and left pupils in no doubt about how to improve their work. Resources were well made and highlighted how effectively the RE scheme was being customised to meet the needs of learners. Support staff worked effectively with pupils.

The effectiveness of leadership and management in promoting religious education is good

Leadership has clarity of purpose, bringing two Catholic schools together. They are in the process of merging policy and practice and ensuring that religious education influences all aspects of the school. Leaders are committed to the school's key role in the educational mission of the Church and staff are provided with encouragement and challenge. Teacher expectations are high in St Gildas' Catholic Primary School and religious education delivers a developmental content to pupils. The RE scheme is supplemented to ensure content is thought provoking for pupils. Governors are strategically involved in RE and they have contributed to writing the self-evaluation. The headteacher has ensured that there are good systems in place for effective induction processes for non-Catholic staff and that planned moderation activities impact positively on outcomes for most pupils.

What should the school do to develop further in classroom religious education?

- Ensure that the high-quality class discussion is consolidated by planned tasks that promote learning at a deeper level.

B. Catholic Life of the School

What has improved since the last inspection?

The recommendations from the last inspection were for the school to empower pupils to lead liturgy and for pupils to be involved in identifying and developing fundraising for local and wider charities. While school has made some progress towards these targets, and pupils lead worship and some assemblies, this practice has not become embedded. Pupils do not yet choose charities and develop fundraising. These recommendations remain a focus for St. Gildas'.

The place of religious education as the core of the curriculum

is good

The school meets the 10% Bishops' requirement for religious education. The subject has good status within the school and parent community. It has a good budget in line with other core subject areas. Accommodation is good, however the release time for the leader of religious education is minimal and this limits effectiveness. Governors are committed to supporting the review and development of quality religious education. There is a newly appointed governor for RE who has already begun to work with leaders and is well placed to support and review the development of religious education.

The experience of Catholic worship – prayer and liturgy – for the whole school community

is good

Prayer and worship are central to the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic institution. The school ensures that prayer and worship are a daily part of pupils' experience. The entrance area has a vibrant display area for Pentecost and the dining hall has a display about collective worship where pupils have had opportunities to reflect on their work leading class worship. Creativity is in evidence in these bright and colourful displays; another display about Christianity in the Byzantine Empire demonstrates how St. Gildas' school makes sure RE permeates all aspects of school life. There was a high level of respect in evidence to ensure pupils sat together to pray and then eat. The celebration of the liturgical year is strong, staff alongside the parish priest, put a great deal of effort into ensuring that celebrations are important. In a Year 3 collective act of worship observed, pupils were clearly used to the structure of their worship and time was provided for reflection as well as response. In a Key Stage 2 assembly observed, pupils were reverent and respectful. They were fully engaged in the assembly and enthusiastic in their responses. Pupils are beginning to take more responsibility for planning and leading worship in class. They have yet to plan and lead assemblies on a regular basis. A prayer book between home and school is used as an effective tool to engage families. Pupils told inspectors they enjoyed taking the prayer book home.

The contribution to the Common Good – service and social justice –

is good

Pupils respect each other and in 'Gold award' assemblies celebrate each other's gifts and talents. Pupils have some understanding of the call to serve. They spoke to inspectors about their work fundraising for CAFOD and the walk for hunger, however pupils do not have enough leadership opportunities; teachers choose and develop links with the charities and this impacts on the clarity of their understanding of their own roles in this area. Pupils understand what is distinctive about being in a Catholic school; the parish priest is hugely popular, and influential in helping pupils understand

that the call to justice and service is an essential part of belonging to a Catholic community. He celebrates a teaching Mass to help pupils understand the structure of Mass. Pupils could link parables to demonstrate their good solid understanding of the theology underpinning their actions. Pupils told inspectors that on occasion they planned assemblies; Year 4 had recently written an assembly on 'May is the month of Mary'. Pupils understood the structure they must follow to prepare worship however they are not yet fully independent in this regard.

The partnership with parents, school and parish, and collaboration as an integral part of the diocese through its relationship with the diocesan Bishop and those acting on his behalf

is good

St Gildas' promotes strong links with the parish, parents and carers. Parents are very supportive, and positive about the school: 71 replies to the diocesan parent questionnaire were received and inspectors met with parents before school. Post-covid St Gildas' is actively seeking to encourage more parents into school. There are strong parish links; the parish priest is a regular visitor and pupils are taught that the parish is the main experience of the Church for Catholics. Parents are appreciative of learning about other faiths as it 'reflects the society in which we live'. They are pleased that religious education is taught in an engaging way and 'is providing a strong foundation in Christian values as well as clear sense of belonging to the school and to the faith'. One parent commented 'My children massively benefit from being at this Catholic school. It has given them another dimension to their education and is helping them develop into well rounded and considerate members of society'. Another wrote 'I am beyond impressed with the vast wealth of knowledge that both of my daughters have about our Catholic faith'.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management in promoting the Catholic life of the school

is good

St Gildas' mission statement 'Through our actions, we try to live as Jesus lived' is a good example of the school's understanding of itself as a Catholic school. St Gildas federated with St. Peter-in-Chains in 2018 and is in the process of streamlining all policies and practices. The programme of study for religious education was established in the first year of federation. The pandemic closures, staff restructuring, a building programme, a change of leadership and falling numbers impacted on rigorous analysis and self-evaluation; leaders recognise this and have put steps in place to address issues. This work has not hampered leaders' determination to promote the Catholic life of the school. Governors and leaders celebrate the Catholic life by forging strong parish/school/parent links. They demonstrate a sound understanding of their strategic responsibilities as they develop the common identity of the newly federated schools whilst not underestimating the journey ahead.

What should the school do to develop further the Catholic life of the school?

- Provide further opportunities for pupil leadership and ensure pupil leadership is daily practice in school.
- Provide opportunities for vibrant and engaging worship and prayer to ensure prayer life is sufficiently deepened and developed as pupils move through the school.

Information about this school

- The school is a one/two form entry Catholic Junior school in the locality of Crouch End.
- The school Federated with St Peter in Chains RC Infant School in September 2018.
- The school serves the parish of St Peter-in-Chains Catholic Church, Hornsey.
- The proportion of pupils who are baptised Catholic is 79%.
- The proportion of pupils who are from other Christian denominations is 14% and from other faiths is 3%. The remaining pupils are from families who have not declared a faith.
- The percentage of Catholic teachers in the school is 89%.
- The number of teachers with a Catholic qualification is number 2.
- There are 18 children (12%) in the school with special educational needs or disabilities of whom 4 (3%) have statements of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)/ Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP).
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is below average.
- The number of pupils speaking English as an Additional Language is 11 (7%).
- There is an average rate of families claiming free school meals: 29 children (20%).
- 22 pupils receive the Pupil Premium (15%).

Department for Education Number	3093509
Unique Reference Number	102151
Local Authority	Haringey

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils	7 -11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on roll	147
The appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Brid Daly
Headteacher	Miss Ellen Robertson
Telephone number	02083481902
Website	www.stpeterandstgildas.co.uk
Email address	admin@st-gildas.haringey.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	March 2015

Classroom religious education	Good
The Catholic life of the school	Good

Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out (i) under the requirements of the Canon 806 and (ii) in accordance with the Framework for Diocesan Inspections 2015 approved by the Archbishop of Westminster and (iii) under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

- The inspectors would like to thank the governors, headteacher, staff, pupils and parents for their co-operation over the conduct of the inspection.
- During the inspection 7 lessons or part lessons were observed.
- The inspectors attended 3 acts of worship or assemblies.
- Meetings were held with school staff, pupils and governors.
- Other evidence was gathered from contacts with parents through a questionnaire, scrutiny of a sample of pupils' work, observation of pupils in and out of lessons and examination of school documents.

Inspection Team

The inspectors are appointed by the Archbishop.

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Lead Inspector

Ms Angela Dodd

Associate Inspector

Mrs Katherine Sheridan

Associate Inspector

Ms Rosemarie Sorohan

Associate Inspector

Information about inspection

The purpose of Diocesan inspection is to report to and advise the Archbishop on the quality of classroom religious education and the Catholic life of the school. The inspection report is also used to inform parents and carers, and the wider Catholic community. Inspection provides an opportunity to support, challenge, evaluate and promote the work of Catholic schools. It also assists schools in the work of self-evaluation and improvement, and enables the Diocese to celebrate with schools their sense of identity and their strengths as Catholic schools.

Inspection Grades

- Outstanding
- Good
- Requires improvement
- Causing concern

This report is published by the Diocese of Westminster and is available at:

<http://rcdow.org.uk/education/schools>

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