

# Gillespie Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	100405
<b>Local Authority</b>	Islington
<b>Inspection number</b>	363638
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Hilary Macdonald HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	229
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Jon Goldhill
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Mark Owen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Gillespie Road Islington Islington N5 1LH
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited nine lessons and saw eight teachers. During the inspection, meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed much of the school's work, and looked in detail at pupils' workbooks, assessment information about pupils' progress, monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, policies and plans for further development. Inspectors also considered questionnaire responses from staff and pupils and from 105 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The quality of teaching and learning and how well pupils attain and make progress throughout the school.
- The use and effectiveness of target setting and the guidance given to pupils on how to further improve their work.
- The effectiveness of the curriculum in meeting the needs of all pupils.
- The strength of leadership at senior and middle management levels.

## Information about the school

Gillespie is a slightly smaller than average one-form entry primary school, housed in a three-storey Victorian building in North Islington. The school population is diverse, reflecting the wealth of cultures and backgrounds within the local community. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. A very high proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and almost half the pupils speak English as an additional language. The main groups represented are pupils of Bangladeshi origin and those of White British heritage. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. Gillespie is a member of several partnerships, including the Islington Zone partnership, which provides many opportunities for collaborative work between primary and secondary schools in the locality. The school runs a breakfast club and a wide range of after-school activities.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

"Inspirational" means seeing something and saying "Wow!" I want to do that!" wrote one pupil. Gillespie is an outstanding school that provides much that is inspirational for pupils and all members of the school community. The contribution and involvement of families, the local community and wider partnerships are significant factors in the success of this school.

The standards pupils achieve by the time they leave have been broadly average for a number of years. However, this position has improved and the inspection found attainment currently in Year 6 to be above average, with pupils having made outstanding progress throughout their time at school.

One of the greatest strengths of the school is the exceptional curriculum provision. It is carefully and successfully designed to maximise opportunities to make links between subjects; for example, in English, pupils wrote in response to a painting by Vermeer, simultaneously developing speaking, listening and writing skills as well as finding out about a famous artist and considering their own response to the painting. All pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 learn a stringed instrument, either the violin or cello, with all music in school taught to a very high standard by a specialist teacher. Pupils who display musical talent have additionally been invited to take part in extra-curricular orchestral and choral activities. Equally impressive opportunities exist for pupils to develop and participate in a wide range of sporting and wider interest activities, with many after-school clubs and competitive team events.

Pupils know their learning targets and the school has clear systems and practices in place for assessing pupils' work and planning according to their needs. In some classes, such as Year 6, assessment was observed being used outstandingly well and, as a result, pupils made rapid progress. However, this very high standard is not consistent throughout the school. In all cases, marking is positive and, at its best, marking provides clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work further. Nevertheless, there is some variation in the quality of feedback and advice across subjects and year groups. As a result of strong care, guidance and support and an evident emphasis on social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, pupils develop extremely well as responsible and concerned young citizens and their behaviour is outstanding.

The headteacher, deputy headteacher and governors provide exemplary leadership. They relentlessly evaluate the school's provision, including the opportunities for, and the achievements of, the pupils. Success is celebrated, but improvement is continuously sought. As a result, there have been significant developments since the school's previous positive inspection. Leadership is now distributed throughout the school and middle leaders are clear about their roles in the drive to raise attainment further. These factors indicate that the school has excellent capacity to continue on its upward path.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics so that an increased proportion of pupils attain and exceed the nationally expected levels by the end of Key Stage 2 by:
  - ensuring that assessment processes, including marking, are used consistently to the same high standards throughout the school so that all pupils receive clear guidance on how to improve their work further.
- Further develop the role of middle leaders in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in the subject areas for which they are responsible.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

<b>1</b>
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Pupils' progress is accelerating throughout the school and data show that all groups of pupils, including the most able, those who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Some pupils make outstanding progress. Achievement is good overall as pupils attain slightly above expected levels at the end of Key Stage 2. During the inspection, pupils throughout the school were seen to achieve particularly well in English.

Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, and pupils report that they feel safe at all times. Behaviour is excellent. Consideration for others and an eagerness to participate underpin their learning and progress. Pupils are given many excellent opportunities to reflect and consider how they might contribute to school and society; their personal development is a strength of the school. The highly organised school council, green team, buddies and monitors carry out their responsibilities maturely and demonstrate that strong school leadership is shared with pupils. All pupils participate in fund raising and in demonstrating care for others. Examples of this include raising funds for equipment for different classes in the school, raising money for flood relief in Pakistan and forming friendships with children in Niger, Africa. Pupils have a well-developed sense of the diversity of the school, local community and wider world and of their own place, and responsibilities, within each of these. During conversation, one pupil told an inspector: 'We welcome children from every country.' Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and this is represented in the detailed mosaics around the school, reflecting cultures, faiths and a sense of belonging within the theme of 'identity'.

The curriculum, including science, physical education and personal, social and health education, ensures pupils have a very good understanding of what it means to be healthy. In addition, all pupils are encouraged to be active at break times, with exciting equipment available to stimulate their imaginative and creative play. The vast majority of pupils eat a healthy school lunch and told inspectors that they enjoy their school meals. Attendance has improved and is now good. This, coupled with excellent social skills and increased attainment, means that pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their lives.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>1</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good skills and knowledge, and all lessons observed during the inspection had strong features. Almost all teaching is at least good and some is outstanding. Teachers are greatly assisted by well-qualified teaching assistants who make sure that individuals and groups of pupils receive the specific help they need. Pupils with English as an additional language benefit from detailed and intensive support programmes enabling them to develop and build on their speaking, reading and writing skills. As a result, these pupils display confidence in their learning and make good progress.

Assessment is well developed throughout the school to identify what pupils know and can do, and to plan lessons that ensure all pupils make good progress. The pupils themselves are exceptionally skilled at reflecting on their own and others' learning. In one lesson, pupils reviewed their own work, and marked it using stars to identify something they had done well, then wrote themselves a 'wish' ♦ something that they would try do better next time. In another class, pupils carried out a similar exercise, this time reviewing someone else's work and providing feedback on 'best bits' and how to improve in a sensitive manner. Pupil planning days, where targets are shared, ensure that parents/carers, pupils and teachers agree on, and work towards, the same learning goals. Pupils' workbooks are regularly marked, and comments made by teachers, although positive, do not always promote further improvement. In some classes, pupils responded to comments or suggestions made by their teachers.

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The innovative curriculum promotes enthusiasm and encourages pupils to ask questions about their learning. For example, in Year 2, the leaves on a learning tree display all had a question, written by the pupils, that they would like to find the answer to by the end of their topic on growing and health. A small red sticker on a leaf indicated that this question had now been answered! Imaginative links between subject areas maximise learning opportunities as pupils not only learn skills, but learn to consider their emotional response to literature, music and art. Information and communication technology skills are integral to the learning at Gillespie Primary School. Pupils have opportunities to develop strong computer technology and communication skills. They are able to communicate with each other and with pupils in other schools but also experience using information and communication technology in other ways. An example of this is writing and improving poetry via specific online poetry workshops. As a result of this work, pupils entered a North Islington Schools' poetry competition, which a pupil from Gillespie won to become recognised as the poet laureate for schools in this area. A significant range of partnerships, such as those with other schools, within the community and with the local authority, are highly valued and enrich the pupils' educational experiences. Every child in the school is known and treated as an individual. Highly effective practices are in place to support those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable as well as to provide opportunities for those with exceptional skills and talents. Parents' and carers' appreciation for the level of care, guidance and support is reflected in many of their positive comments.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## **How effective are leadership and management?**

The leadership and management of this school are outstanding. There is a deep sense of shared responsibility, common purpose and commitment amongst staff and governors arising from dynamic and effective senior leadership. All leaders are responsible for planning towards continuing improvements and there are excellent opportunities for professional development which link to the needs of the school. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and of current priorities is rigorous. Improvement is evidenced in the rising standards of pupils' work.

The governing body demonstrates a precise understanding of its role in supporting and challenging the school. Governors consider the progress of all pupils and ensure appropriate actions have been taken should any pupil, group or class require additional support. As frequent visitors, in a variety of roles, they understand school priorities and the impact of developments. All statutory duties are carried out effectively and equalities policies and practices are in place, implemented and monitored. Safeguarding arrangements are robust.

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The school is a cohesive and harmonious community that promotes, understands and celebrates equality and diversity. A variety of strong links and partnerships exist with local schools and organisations as well as with a partner school in a contrasting locality within this country and with a school in Niger, Africa.

Parents and carers could not be more enthusiastic about the school; they are considered as partners and valued participants in school life. This is demonstrated through the many parent and carer visitors to assemblies and classrooms to share knowledge and skill, and through the committed parent association that raises significant funds for additional resources and activities, such as the development of the school garden.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>1</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides an exciting environment in which children flourish. In particular, the outdoor learning environment is of the highest standard. Here, children engage enthusiastically in creative and problem-solving activities using a wide range of resources, including building and creative materials, as well as experimenting with sand and water and riding a variety of bikes.

Good and trusting relationships exist between adults and children and between the children themselves. Even the very youngest and newest come into Nursery happily and confidently; on the rare occasions that a child is upset, they are well cared for and encouraged, and, as a result, settle quickly.

School data demonstrate that children now enter Reception with skills broadly in line with those expected for their age and that most make good progress. Adults are deployed well, and activities planned are based on detailed observations, taking account of children's prior knowledge and understanding, and also of their interests.



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The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed, and self-evaluation is used effectively to formulate plans for further improvements. Partnerships with parents and carers are promoted well through regular progress meetings, carefully managed induction procedures and information booklets.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about the provision the school makes for their children in every respect. The vast majority of parents and carers agreed or strongly agreed that the school keeps children safe, that their children enjoy school and that teaching is good. Inspection evidence supports these views. Key to the high-quality relationship with parents and carers is the accessibility of staff who support their needs or concerns. Many parents and carers made positive comments such as: 'I am extremely happy with the education my children are getting at Gillespie. The whole school community (children, teachers, parents, support staff) are very supportive in both educational and emotional terms.'

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gillespie Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 105 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 229 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	79	75	24	23	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	78	74	24	23	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	61	58	41	39	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	57	39	37	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	74	70	28	27	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	55	38	36	5	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	55	52	43	41	2	2	2	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	42	40	46	44	3	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	52	40	38	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	64	61	37	35	2	2	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	56	53	41	39	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	76	72	26	25	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	81	77	22	21	1	1	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



4 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Gillespie Primary School, Islington N5 1LH**

Thank you so much for the warm welcome that you gave to inspectors when we visited your school. It was wonderful to have the opportunity to meet and talk to so many of you, and to look at the work in your books and see the many excellent displays in your classrooms and in the corridors around school. We could see that your school takes excellent care of you and your families, and provides you with an outstanding education. Many things impressed us, particularly your behaviour and the enthusiastic attitudes you show towards your learning.

Your lessons are interesting and exciting, and are well planned by your teachers so that you learn about more than one thing at a time! For example, we saw some of you sketching while listening to music, and others writing a report about an incident in another part of the country. In your school, you have great opportunities to learn about, and take part in, many musical, artistic and sporting activities. You show mature understanding of your community and of your place in the world. Many older pupils really do help to run the school by taking on positions of responsibility, including being 'buddies' to younger children on the playground, helping others to read or by being on the 'green team' or school council. Everyone we spoke to told us how much they enjoy school, and many of you spoke about breakfast club or the many activities you can choose to attend after school.

To help your school continue to improve even further, we have asked your headteacher to make sure that everyone continues to focus on developing strong skills in English and mathematics, and that teachers who are responsible for other subjects have more opportunities to see how well you are learning and progressing. We have asked that whenever teachers assess your work, during lessons or in your books, they make sure you all understand very clearly exactly what you need to do next in order to achieve your very best. All of you can help, too, by continuing to approach all aspects of school life with the same determination, enthusiasm and enjoyment that you showed to inspectors on our visit.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Macdonald

Her Majesty's Inspector

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