

Gilbert Heathcote Nursery and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112662
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	357162
Inspection dates	9–10 November 2010
Reporting inspector	John Paddick

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Wilders
Headteacher	Val Dickey (Acting) Judith Ottewell (Acting)
Date of previous school inspection	4 June 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited seven lessons and scrutinised a wide variety of pupils' work, especially in mathematics and writing. Of the school's five teachers, four were observed in class. The other was the acting headteacher, who was not with a class during the inspection. She was observed taking assembly. Meetings were held with the acting headteachers, governors, coordinator of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and the coordinator for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Meetings were also held with groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at minutes of the governing body, the school development plan, records of pupils' progress and safeguarding documentation. They analysed 23 questionnaires from parents and carers and 14 from members of staff.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following.

- What standards are being reached by all groups of pupils, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics?
- What improvements has the school made to the outdoor curriculum?
- What benefits are gained from the federation arrangements with the nearby junior school?
- How effective are leadership and management under the current temporary arrangements with two acting headteachers?

Information about the school

Gilbert Heathcote Nursery and Infant School is smaller than most schools of similar type. The vast majority of its pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as a second language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. Around one in ten of the school's pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is below average. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make up around one per cent of the school's roll, which is average. The school has been federated with a nearby junior school since September 2007 and shares the same governing body. Since the previous inspection, there have been several staffing changes. Two acting headteachers are temporarily sharing the role of headteacher. A new headteacher will be in charge of the school from January 2011.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Gilbert Heathcote Nursery and Infant School provides its pupils with a good standard of education. This is fully recognised by parents and carers who say that their children like coming to school because it has a welcoming family atmosphere and plenty of interesting activities to engage them. Capacity for further improvement is satisfactory rather than good because the school is going through changes at headteacher level. The two acting headteachers have the full confidence of parents and staff and the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis. Since the previous inspection, the school has tackled the areas suggested for development well, especially in relation to the improvement of the outside areas for pupils of all ages. There is now a good range of fixed equipment, including a climbing wall, which the pupils can use under supervision before and after school and at break and lunchtimes. The federation with the nearby junior school has provided several benefits. These include a smooth transfer for pupils from Year 2 to Year 3, shared staff training and the alignment of assessment procedures.

Good teaching throughout the school ensures that all groups of pupils make good progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who join the nursery with very weak communication skills. Teachers and classroom assistants monitor pupils' progress towards challenging targets well and provide extra support when it is needed. Pupils respond positively to this good quality provision by displaying positive attitudes and almost always behaving well. They really enjoy coming to school and feel safe and secure. They say that teachers and classroom assistants make learning fun and provide them with a good range of extra activities and visits. These enable them to develop personal and social skills well. There have been recent changes in the way that the school organises its curriculum for information and communication technology. These have not been fully successful because pupils' access to computers is limited. Other ways of developing pupils' competence in this area are now under consideration. Staff and governors fully recognise this and know that it is an area for urgent attention.

Attainment by the end of Year 2 is average. This represents good achievement for pupils because they progress well from below average starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By Year 2, standards in reading, writing and mathematics all improve to broadly average. However, there is still scope to reach higher standards. The key is a stronger emphasis on linking sounds and letters, reading and writing in Nursery and Reception so that children transfer to Year 1 with at least average standards in these areas.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that children reach at least average levels in reading and writing by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage by organising more activities to promote them in Nursery and Reception.
- Improve the curriculum for information and communication technology by making a final decision on how best to deliver it, producing a development plan with timescales and monitoring its effectiveness.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils enjoy their education and cooperate well with the adults who work with them. Their good behaviour in lessons helps to support the universally good learning atmosphere that pervades the school. While most pupils listen carefully in class a few become a little restless and inattentive at times. Pupils enjoy productive relationships with the adults who work with them. They generally relate well to each other and work effectively in pairs and groups in class. They have a particularly strong grasp of what constitutes healthy living. Their recent attendance at school has varied from above average to below average and is now recovering strongly after the effects of bouts of illness. Pupils are proud of their school and willingly take on responsibility. An example is their contribution to the harvest festival when they collect groceries for elderly people, who live near to the school, and experience the joy of giving.

Pupils make good progress in their four years in the school. They enter the nursery with knowledge and skills that are below those expected for their age and steadily narrow the gap to achieve average levels by the time they leave. The standards that pupils reach have remained relatively constant over the past three years. National Curriculum assessments at the end of Year 2 have been average in reading, writing and mathematics. Current work in Year 2 reflects this. Pupils generally take a pride in their work and present it well. Their handwriting, spelling, sentence construction and fluency are all average for their age. In mathematics, pupils are becoming confident with the addition and subtraction of three digit numbers and understand how to apply this to problems set in words. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Evidence of this is the fact that pupils are often removed from the special needs register because they no longer need intensive assistance to enable them to learn at least at an adequate rate.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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?

Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress both academically and with their personal development. Teachers manage their classes well and provide their pupils with a good range of interesting activities. They utilise the skills of their teaching assistants effectively so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to others in the same class. Good planning is a strong feature and teachers match work well to pupils' needs. Teachers explain work clearly, often with telling illustrations on electronic whiteboards, so pupils know what is expected of them. Question-and-answer sessions give all pupils an opportunity to participate and learn. Marking is frequent and explains clearly how pupils can improve their work.

The curriculum provides pupils with a secure pathway for making good progress in the development of most of their basic skills. It is satisfactory rather than good because there are weaknesses in planning for developing pupils' skills in information and communication technology. This is limiting the amount of progress that pupils are making in this area. The wide range of visits and extra-curricular activities helps to underpin the good progress that pupils make with their personal development. Good care, guidance and support make a strong contribution to the quality of pupils' education. This feature of the school's work is recognised by the pupils themselves and their parents and carers. Teachers and classroom assistants know all of the pupils extremely well and give them all the help and support that they need.

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

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The two acting headteachers provide the school with good temporary leadership. Good staff morale bears testimony to the success of their work. Lessons are monitored frequently and effectively, and pupils' progress is tracked efficiently. Understandably, plans to move the school forward towards the next level are largely on hold until the new headteacher arrives in January 2011. The development plan correctly identifies what needs to be improved but it lacks precision in terms of timescales, monitoring procedures and academic standards to be reached. Governors have a good grasp of the school's strong features and know what still needs to be done. However, their role in monitoring the school's work is an area for further development.

Good safeguarding procedures are firmly in place and have a high profile in the daily life of the school. It promotes equal opportunities well and there is no evidence of discrimination of any description. Provision of extra adult support for pupils when they need it is a really strong feature of the school's work. Promotion of community cohesion is incorporated into curriculum planning well but the evaluation of its effectiveness is insufficiently frequent or precise. Pupils are eager to take on responsibilities in school and in the locality and do so in many ways. Playground buddies and fundraising for charities are good examples. Their links with people from other countries' cultures are limited but increasing.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress from starting points in the nursery that are below expectations for their age. Sometimes they are very low, especially in terms of communication skills. A diverse range of activities provides good opportunities for children to investigate, explore, experiment, and socialise in pairs and groups. Children soon learn how to form friendships and share. By the time they join Year 1 most children are reaching or exceeding most of the nationally expected standards. The exceptions are linking sounds and letters, reading and writing, where they are below average.

Good leadership and management mean that teaching is adapted to meet children's needs well. Teachers and their assistants work productively as a team and they provide very good levels of care and attention. Children are eager to come to school and learn because they enjoy the lessons that the staff prepare for them. Teachers and their assistants use a good range of resources both inside and outdoors to promote the good progress that children make. The outdoor area has improved substantially since the previous inspection. It is a particularly valuable resource with its outside classroom and provision of a good range of resources. Relationships between children and the adults who work with them are good. Communication with parents and their involvement in their children's learning and progress are also good.

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

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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 have largely very positive views of the school's work. Inspection evidence supports these views and identifies areas where improvements can still be made. A small minority of parents has concerns about the management of pupils' behaviour. Inspectors agree that there are instances of misbehaviour but they consider that they are managed appropriately by the staff and only very rarely interrupt learning. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good and often impeccable.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gilbert Heathcote Nursery and Infant 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 23 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 118 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	83	3	13	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	78	5	22	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	13	57	9	39	1	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	65	7	30	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	70	7	30	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	61	9	39	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	70	7	30	0	0	0	0
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)	9	39	10	43	0	0	1	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	13	57	9	39	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	43	7	30	4	17	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	43	12	52	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	15	65	8	35	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	78	5	22	0	0	0	0

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



11 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gilbert Heathcote Nursery and Infant School, Chesterfield, S41 8NF

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. A particular thank you goes to those of you who were so keen to show us your work and those who met with us at lunchtime. We were impressed by your polite manners and good behaviour and we were pleased to know that you really enjoy coming to school.

We found that Gilbert Heathcote Nursery and Infant School gives you a good education. Lessons are good and your teachers and classroom assistants really care about you. As a result, nearly all of you are making good progress with reading, writing and numeracy. Your two acting headteachers are doing a good job in making sure that the school continues to run smoothly until the new headteacher arrives.

Your school can still improve further and we have asked the governors and staff to make some changes to enable you to learn more quickly. These are to:

- increase opportunities for reading and writing in Nursery and Reception
- provide more lessons where you use computers.

You can help by continuing to behave well and work hard.

Yours sincerely

John Paddick

Lead inspector

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