

Ghyllgrove Community Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114914
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	378958
Inspection dates	8–9 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Godfrey Bancroft

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Colin Moloney
Headteacher	Judith Gibbon
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 June 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors and with the help of a sign language interpreter for the hearing impaired. Inspectors observed 19 lessons taught by 11 teachers. In addition they observed parts of four other lessons.

Meetings were held with parents, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work. They looked at information about pupils' attainment and progress, plans for school improvement and self-evaluation and various policies that underpin the school's practice. Inspectors also took into consideration the views expressed in 56 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and from questionnaires returned by pupils and by members of staff.

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

- Is there compelling evidence to support the school's view that attainment and progress are improving?
- How effectively do teachers provide for the full range of ability in the mixed-age classes?
- Does teaching provide sufficient challenge for potentially higher attaining pupils?
- How effectively do key subject leaders contribute to improvements in learning and pupils' progress?

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized junior school. The percentage of pupils known to be entitled to a free school meal is broadly average. The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are fewer pupils than found usually who come from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities that are subject to school action and the proportion with statements for their special educational needs and/or disabilities are higher than found usually. The school hosts a 12 place hearing-impaired resource base for pupils aged 3-11. At the time of the inspection the base had five pupils. Among other awards the school holds the Basic Skills Award, Healthy Schools and Sports Activemark.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Ghyllgrove Junior School provides a satisfactory quality of education. Pupils enjoy their learning. They behave well and work hard during lessons. One pupil said, 'At Ghyllgrove you can sometimes make mistakes, but the teachers always help you to learn from them.' Parents and carers are also very pleased with the quality of education the school provides for their children. The school promotes a strong focus on pupils' personal development to provide the basis for their improving academic progress. Amongst many positive comments made by parents and carers one said, 'I think the school is doing everything it can to make sure my child reaches her targets at the end of Year 6.'

Since the last inspection the headteacher and members of the governing body have brought about marked improvement in many areas of the school's work. The subject leaders for English and mathematics and the assessment co-ordinator have also played a central role in bringing about improvements. Attainment is below average and pupils make satisfactory progress. Underpinning this picture is a trend of steadily improving attainment and increasing rates of progress, over the last three years. This is clearly evident from test results and from the work seen in pupils' books and during lessons. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are taught in the resource base for pupils who have hearing impairment make good progress as a result of the good provision made for them. These pupils receive particularly effective support from teaching assistants and benefit from work that is matched well to their individual needs. Teaching is satisfactory, but the amount of good and outstanding teaching is also rising. The extent to which pupils feel safe and the care, guidance and support they receive are now outstanding. These improvements provide clear evidence of the school's good capacity to sustain improvements in the future.

Teachers give significant attention to promoting the mental and oral skills of mathematics and providing good opportunities for pupils to use and apply these skills; this is increasing pupils' confidence and attainment is improving. In many lessons similar improvements are evident in English. However, attainment in English lags behind that for mathematics. This is because there are times when teachers do not use questioning sufficiently well to correct and extend pupils' speaking and listening skills. For some pupils, their progress in writing also slows because not enough attention is given to linking their knowledge of letter and word sounds to what they write or to refining their spelling and grammar.

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In the majority of lessons the challenge set for the full range of ages and abilities, including for the most able, is usually appropriate. However, there are times when the work set is not matched closely enough to the level that pupils have reached and does not move them on quickly enough. At other times teachers are not always sufficiently prompt in rectifying pupils' misunderstandings. When this happens progress tends to slow down.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it is at least good or better and matches the best in the school by:
 - ensuring that what is taught challenges all pupils appropriately and reflects their age-related expectations
 - correcting any misunderstandings that pupils might have about their learning, either immediately or as soon as possible.

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress in English by:
 - using questioning to enhance their speaking and listening skills
 - strengthening pupil's ability to make links between their knowledge of letter and word sounds and what they write
 - focussing more precisely on improving pupils' spelling and grammar.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Although attainment is below average it is improving. The gap is closing as it edges steadily towards the national average. The school's data on assessment and progress and the work in pupils' books indicates that pupils currently in Year 6 are on course to exceed the basic national expectation for attainment and progress (formerly known as 'floor standards') by the time they leave. The satisfactory progress that pupils make is often from relatively low starting points.

Pupils enjoy their learning. They behave well during lessons and around the school. They are enthusiastic learners who are eager to answer questions and apply themselves well to the tasks that are set for them. Pupils respond very well to the school's systems to recognise and reward their efforts. A good example of this is the system for rewarding pupils who read at home. Pupils are eager to take responsibility and make a good contribution to the school and local community. They are proud to be part of the school council and being able to influence what happens in school. They also take pride in acting as playground buddies and setting up the audio-visual equipment for assemblies. Pupils are also very well informed about how to stay safe

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and to recognise and resolve any potential risks they might face. All the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are rightly confident that their children are safe in school. Pupils are also well-informed about the importance of eating healthily and about the value of taking regular exercise.

Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They celebrate each other’s qualities and successes and work well together. They greatly enjoy the many artistic, musical and sporting activities that are available to them. Singing in assemblies is of high quality and the school choir, in addition to singing for local community groups, has also performed at a well-known concert venue in London. Pupils appreciate and have a good understanding of their increasing multi-cultural locality. For example, they relate well to those pupils who come from the Traveller community. They also show sensitivity towards those pupils who are taught in the resource base for children who have hearing impairment.

Pupils’ ability to use and apply the basic skills of English, mathematics and information and communication technology is satisfactory. This combined with pupils’ good social skills, means they are prepared satisfactorily for the next stages of their education and for the future. The school has worked effectively to improve attendance, to the extent that it is now broadly average.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory and in the majority of lessons work is well-matched to pupils’

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

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needs and the stage they have reached. Good attention is usually paid to the development of pupils' basic skills, married closely to opportunities to use and apply these skills. However, in a minority of lessons the work is not matched closely enough to pupils' learning needs and opportunities to use and apply basic skills to the full extent of pupils' capability are sometimes missed. This applies most frequently to teachers' use of questioning to promote pupils' speaking and listening and to improving their writing by developing accurate spelling and correct use of grammar. Teachers frequently celebrate pupils' efforts and successes and this is helping many pupils to become increasingly confident learners.

Assessment is used effectively to promote pupils' learning. Any pupils who show signs of falling behind are identified at an early stage and planned interventions are put in place to help them to catch up. This applies especially to those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and to those who are taught in the resource base for pupils who have hearing impairment. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the good progress that these pupils make. This applies particularly to the arrangements when teaching assistants teach these pupils in small groups. Teachers are also effective at ensuring that pupils are aware of how well they are progressing during lessons and over time. Pupils also know what they need to do to make their work even better.

The curriculum meets pupils' learning needs well. There is a strong focus on promoting their personal development and well-being. This supports the school's commitment to ensuring that these features of pupils' development are in place before successful academic progress can take place. The focus on promoting the basic skills of English and mathematics is given an increasingly high profile; this is evident during dedicated times and across the full range of subjects. However, just occasionally opportunities are missed in some subjects to promote these important basic skills. The wider curriculum enhances pupils' learning well through a range of educational visits and additional activities and clubs. Year 6 pupils go to France and Belgium. This visit promotes their personal development through outdoor and adventurous activities and gives them telling insights into key events of the two world wars. Many pupils enjoy communicating with and working alongside a well-known author of children's books who is attached to the school. The work of this author is making a valuable contribution to improving pupils' writing.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils and their parents and carers are confident that should they experience any problems there is always someone at school who they can turn to for help. The personal and learning needs of each pupil are well known to the staff. Links with partner providers are excellent; especially in respect of those pupils who at times, because of their circumstances, might potentially be at risk. Communication with parents and carers about their children's learning is also excellent; particularly for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities or who are taught in the resource base for children who have hearing impairment.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The commitment of the headteacher, senior leaders and key subject leaders is helping to promote steady improvement in many areas of the school's work. Self-evaluation is accurate. This is used in conjunction with sound procedures for checking on the quality of teaching to identify what needs to be improved. Areas for improvement are set out clearly in the school's development plans, which include the setting of suitably challenging and realistic targets for pupils' attainment and progress. The governing body makes a good contribution to the management and improvement of the school. Members of the governing body are supportive and well informed about all aspects of the school's work. They also have robust procedures for liaising with senior leaders and subject leaders to hold the school to account for the quality of its work.

The school's engagement with parents and carers is good. Parents are kept well-informed about their children's progress. The school has recently introduced 'Team around the Child' meetings which involve parents and carers in discussing their child's progress and how it might be improved. In some cases these meetings are helping the school to include parents who in the past have proved hard to reach. The school also provides frequent workshops for parents on a range of helpful topics; for example, managing behaviour and guiding their child to read at home. Partnerships to promote pupils' learning and well-being are effective. For example, the school is a leading contributor to the Basildon East Services Trust, which draws together expertise from a range of agencies to support pupils' academic and personal development. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory; leaders have a clear understanding of the cultural, religious and socio-economic make-up of the community and successfully involve pupils in a broad range of activities to broaden their awareness. However, the school has yet to make a detailed evaluation of the impact of this aspect of its work.

The governing body and members of staff work effectively to eliminate all forms of discrimination and to ensure that pupils have an equal opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability. For example, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have hearing impairment, play a full part in all aspects of school life. All requirements to ensure the safeguarding of pupils are in place. Staff are vigilant, committed to ensuring the safety of pupils and benefit from good quality, up-to-date training. The available resources are used wisely; for

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example in the deployment of teaching assistants, who do a good job. In relation to the outcomes for pupils the school gives satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
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	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire is similar to that for the majority of primary inspections. Parents’ and carers’ views of the school are very positive. All the respondents say they are happy with the overall experience of their child at school. In addition, they all think that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps their children safe. Parents and carers are also confident that the school meets their child’s particular needs. A significant minority of parents and carers feel the school does not deal effectively with unacceptable behaviour. During their time in school inspectors observed good behaviour, both during lessons and at other times, such as breaks and lunchtimes.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Ghyllgrove Community Junior 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 55 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 181 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	27	48	29	52	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	55	25	45	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	23	41	32	55	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	52	24	43	3	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	30	54	25	45	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	26	48	26	48	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	45	29	52	1	2	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)	25	45	26	46	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	24	43	32	57	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	36	27	49	6	11	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	24	43	27	48	4	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	28	49	26	46	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	36	63	21	37	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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"> ■ 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.



10 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Ghyllgrove Community Junior School, Basildon, SS14 2BG

You may recall that recently I visited Ghyllgrove with my colleagues to undertake the school inspection. I must thank those of you who took the time to talk to us about Ghyllgrove and to tell us about your work. We were pleased to hear how much you enjoy school and that your parents and carers are pleased with the education Ghyllgrove provides for you.

We concluded that Ghyllgrove is currently a satisfactory school. However, we are aware that it is getting better all the time. Your attainment in the national tests is rising steadily and you are making better progress than in the past. We think that you behave well and learn enthusiastically in lessons. We were pleased to hear that you feel safe in school and we think the care, guidance and support that the adults provide for you is outstanding.

We are asking your headteacher and the staff to do some things that we think will help the school to keep the trend of improvement on track. We want them to make sure that the work they set for you is always matched well to the stage you have reached and to make sure that you understand fully what you are learning. We want them to use questions carefully to help improve your speaking and listening skills. We have also asked them to make sure that you can transfer your understanding of letter and word sounds into your writing, to spell correctly and use grammar correctly. We feel these areas for improvement will help you to prepare well for the future.

For your part, you can help by continuing to do your best and by always listening carefully to your teachers.

Yours sincerely

Godfrey Bancroft
Lead Inspector

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