

# Gunter Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	103208
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	395378
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 April 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Peter Kerr

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>	247
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Harris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Matthew Poyser
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Gunter Road Erdington Birmingham B24 0RU
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 464 2367
<b>Fax number</b>	0121 464 8015
<b>Email address</b>	head@gunter.bham.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	23–24 April 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	395378



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Peter Kerr

Additional Inspector

Helen Griffiths

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 14 lessons taught by eight teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and senior members of staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at curriculum planning, monitoring files, records of pupils' progress and the school's self-evaluation. They also took account of responses to the inspection questionnaire received from 40 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. Nearly one third of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is an above-average proportion. About four in ten pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is also above average. The largest minority ethnic groups are Caribbean and mixed White British and Caribbean. A broadly average proportion of pupils are supported at the school action plus stage, or have a statement of educational needs, including some recently admitted pupils with significant behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. Major redevelopment of the area close to the school since the last inspection has caused significant changes to the school roll, with many pupils joining or leaving the current Years 3 to 6.

The school meets the current floor standards, which are the minimum standards for attainment and progress expected by the government. The school holds the Eco-Schools bronze award and National Healthy Schools status.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. There is a buzz of enthusiasm in lessons and a 'family feel' that is welcomed by parents and carers. Pupils enjoy learning and make good progress in their attainment and personal development. The school is not outstanding because achievement is lower in mathematics than English, particularly for more-able pupils, and the curriculum does not include enough opportunities for independent, creative learning.
- Pupils achieve well in English. They have regular opportunities to apply new skills and marking gives clear guidance on how to improve their work. Progress is good in mathematics, but marking is not as effective and there are fewer opportunities to consolidate skills by applying them practically.
- Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and teaching assistants work effectively with teachers to support pupils who need extra help. Some lessons in English and mathematics are outstanding because they encourage individuality and motivate pupils to learn independently. The pace of learning slows when teachers direct pupils too closely.
- Pupils feel very safe at school. They behave consistently well and their attitudes to learning are sometimes outstanding. They collaborate very effectively and persevere at tasks. This key strength of the school was summed up by a parent, who wrote 'The children are encouraged to behave in a positive manner and to take ownership of their own behaviour and learning.'
- The headteacher provides good leadership and is supported well by the senior leadership team. The governing body has a good understanding of the school and fulfils its roles well. It sets exacting performance management targets for the headteacher and ensures that all staff are challenged to perform well. Good opportunities are provided for professional development.

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

- Raise achievement in mathematics, especially for more-able pupils, by:
  - improving marking so that it provides more effective guidance for pupils on how to improve their skills
  - planning regular opportunities for pupils to consolidate their skills by using and applying them in practical ways
  - creating more opportunities for open-ended, pupil-led investigations so that the more-able pupils can excel.
- Improve the curriculum further by extending planned opportunities for pupils to work independently at projects that require them to use a range of skills and enable them to direct some of their own learning.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils achieve well. Children enter the Nursery with typical levels of development for their age. They make rapid progress so that, by the end of the Reception Year, their attainment is above average. Attainment for those joining Year 1 is broadly average because about half the children move on to other schools, including many with higher attainment. In each year from Year 1, pupils are making good progress from their starting points and are on course to reach above average attainment by the end of in Year 6.

Progress in reading is good throughout the school. Letter sounds are taught systematically and pupils become confident readers. Attainment in reading is broadly average in the current Year 6, rather than above average, because of the impact of pupil movement in and out of the school in previous years. It is above average in Year 2, which has not been affected by this disruption. Pupils' progress is particularly good in writing because regular marking indicates precisely what pupils need to do to improve. The pupils respond readily to this guidance because they are keen to learn. Pupils try equally hard in mathematics, but teachers do not channel their efforts as skilfully and pupils have fewer practical opportunities to practice and consolidate their skills.

A key feature of the best learning seen was a purposeful buzz of pupils absorbed in their tasks. They sustained concentration and effort and collaborated very effectively. Inspectors saw many instances of pupils discussing problems in mathematics enthusiastically and exchanging ideas in English lessons. Learning is exceptionally good in the Early Years Foundation Stage because activities match children's levels of development and individual needs closely. For example, a pupil in the Reception Year with speech difficulties, enthusiastically, described a square as having four corners and four straight sides. The teaching assistant helping him knew his needs well and supported him skilfully to articulate his new knowledge.

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All groups of pupils, including all ethnic groups, make at least as much progress as similar groups nationally. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties learn well because they receive individualised support matched closely to their needs. Deaf children and those with partial hearing are helped to improve their speech through the use of sign language and this helps them learn well.

**Quality of teaching**

Teaching is mostly good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers' planning caters for all abilities and for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Work and support is matched closely to individual needs, enabling most pupils to make optimum progress. More-able pupils are catered for well in both English and mathematics through more demanding tasks. Their needs are met more consistently in English because of sharply focused pointers for improvements in writing.

Pupils learned most effectively when teachers listened to and observed pupils carefully as they worked and prompted them with further questions. For example, two Year 4 pupils researching costs of flights to Paris were asked why one airline was significantly cheaper than another, making them think about a range of possible explanations. On occasions, teachers guide the pupils too closely towards the responses they expect, limiting opportunities for them to explain their own ideas. Pupils' cultural awareness is promoted well through planned opportunities to explore aspects of the diverse cultural backgrounds represented in the school. Parents and carers are invited into school to contribute to this aspect of the pupils' development.

The school helps their children to develop skills in communication, reading, writing, and mathematics. Parents and carers strongly agree that this is the case. However, teachers are only just beginning to plan systematically for consolidation of these skills through regular practical application in creative projects, an area for improvement already identified by the school. Pupils demonstrate at least the expected level of skill for their age in information and communications technology because these are taught systematically in accordance with the recommendations of an Ofsted subject inspection in 2009.

Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding. There is a constant hive of activity as staff support the children's learning, either teaching specific skills, or interacting with children as they learn purposefully through play. For example, children in the Reception Year, confidently, proposed imaginative possibilities for how the toy elephant they had found in one of the play areas could have got there, including by jet pack or parachute, or by crawling under the fence. The knowledge and skills of all staff, evident in their interactions with the children, promote high-quality learning and personal development, including excellent independent learning habits.

**Behaviour and safety of pupils**

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Behaviour was good throughout the inspection and pupils say that this is usually the case. The pupils' excellent attitudes to work help them to get the most out of lessons. This is evident when they work independently and collaboratively. In some lessons, where learning was not as good as it could have been, this was partly because the pupils were not given the chance to work in that way. The great majority of parents and carers agree that behaviour is good at the school. No significant concerns were expressed about bullying and pupils said they feel very safe in school. Older pupils act as 'playground buddies', for example, looking out for pupils who appear isolated or upset or helping them to sort out a problem. When questionnaires carried out by the school revealed that the behaviour of a very few pupils was disrupting learning, the pupils concerned were spoken to and encouraged to reflect on the impact of their behaviour on others. As a result, pupils and staff say there are now very few incidents of disruptive behaviour. Pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are given very effective support to manage their emotions and control their behaviour.

Through the school council, pupils contribute actively to the school and community, for example, they have helped to secure a bicycle shed and scooter rack and are working with the help of a national charity to try and establish a safe cycle route to school. They have also shown initiative in requesting healthy school meals and improving the environment through the Eco-Schools project.

Attendance is low, but the figure is significantly affected by prolonged absence by a very small number of pupils. Robust measures taken by the school have improved attendance for some of these children and this has contributed to a rapid rise in attendance overall over the past two years. Apart from these exceptional cases, attendance is broadly average and improving rapidly and is above average for the current year so far. The school promotes good attendance strongly, for example by rewarding the highest weekly class attendance. The impact of this was seen during the inspection, when two classes were rewarded for 99 per cent attendance during the previous week.

### **Leadership and management**

The headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body have brought about a wide range of improvements to provision and to pupils' academic progress and personal development, demonstrating the capacity to keep the school improving. Teaching is managed well and effective action has been taken to remedy weaknesses identified in performance. Very effective leadership in English has contributed significantly to recent improvements in that subject. The leadership of mathematics has accelerated progress, but has been less effective in enabling pupils to use and apply mathematical skills across the curriculum. Subject leaders have improved the tracking of pupils' progress greatly and this information has been used to hold teachers to account for the achievement of pupils in their classes. The governing body has played an active role by requesting clear and concise data to enable it to monitor the school's performance independently. The school meets all statutory obligations, including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils. Staff feel

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well supported in their professional development and there is a strong team spirit in the school.

The broad and balanced curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development adequately. The school is very successful in promoting equality and tackling discrimination. This is evident in the school's tracking data, which records any potential barriers to learning for each pupil, identifies any pupils that fall behind and puts interventions in place to accelerate progress. The school's work to support pupils with significant behavioural, emotional, and social difficulties has been recognised as very effective by the local authority. Some pupils who have been excluded from their previous schools are now beginning to make secure progress because they are included fully in all aspects of the school and helped to learn effectively.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



25 April 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Gunter Primary School, Birmingham, B24 0RU.**

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we inspected your school. We enjoyed talking with you and looking at the work you have been doing. You are rightly proud of your school, which is a good school. We were impressed with how well you behave in lessons and how well you work together. This helps you to make good progress. We also appreciated all that you do to improve the school and its environment through the school council. You have done well in helping to improve your school dinners and getting the bicycle shed and scooter racks installed.

Teaching is good and you make good progress and achieve well. Your writing is particularly good because you work hard at it and your teachers show you exactly how you can improve. You also try hard at mathematics. You correct your mistakes, but you are not so sure what to do to get to a higher level. We have asked your teachers to give you more guidance on how to improve in mathematics. You can help by being willing to think hard about problems.

We liked the work you have done on different topics and have asked your teachers to give you even more opportunities to work on projects and investigations. Your headteacher has agreed that this is a good idea and that you should be encouraged to do more work on your own and with other pupils. We have asked teachers to help you to use your skills in reading writing and mathematics, but also in science, music, art, drama and other subjects. You can help by thinking of things you would like to learn about and projects you would like to do.

With good wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Peter Kerr  
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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