

Gilbert Inglefield Academy

Inspection report

Unique reference number	138003
Local authority	N/A
Inspection number	399616
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2012
Lead inspector	Judith Matharu HMI

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

Type of school	Academy
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	463
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Bowater
Headteacher	David Neeves
Date of previous school inspection	14 May 2009
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Age group	9–13
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Introduction

Inspection team

Judith Matharu

Her Majesty's Inspector

Helen Bailey

Additional inspector

Neil Gillespie

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 25 lessons, including four joint observations undertaken with members of the senior leadership team. In total, 25 teachers were observed. In addition, two learning walks were undertaken on the second day of the inspection, specifically to observe behaviour in eight lessons. Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and groups of pupils from all year groups. Inspectors observed lessons and looked at a range of pupils' work and school documentation, including progress data, school and department improvements plans and the findings of external audits. Inspectors also considered 320 questionnaires from parents and carers, 21 from staff and 100 from pupils.

Information about the school

Gilbert Inglefield is an average-sized middle school, receiving pupils from a wide area in and around Leighton Buzzard. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is above the national average. The majority of pupils are of White British backgrounds; very few pupils speak English as an additional language.

The school meets the current floor standards, the minimum standards expected by the government, at the end of Key Stage 2. The school currently holds the Healthy Schools award, Investors in People status, the International Schools Gold Award and Sportsmark. On 1 April 2012, the school converted to Academy 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

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school that has improved since its last inspection. It is not outstanding as teaching is not yet consistently at the highest levels and some inconsistencies remain in routine practice.
- Overall, pupils are supported well to give their best and make consistently good progress. By the end of Year 8, nearly all pupils reach standards that are above those expected for this stage of their education in both English and mathematics. Consequently, the achievement of pupils is good.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are lively, willing contributors to school life. They work hard in lessons and enjoy the wide range of opportunities available beyond the formal curriculum. The school applies its revised behaviour management systems consistently and effectively, and the majority of pupils feel safe and behave well. However, a very small minority of pupils struggle to cope with the school's reasonable expectations in terms of behaviour; this is a matter of concern for some pupils and a significant number of parents and carers. Such misbehaviour is dealt with well and disruption minimised but this has not been conveyed sufficiently clearly to parents.
- Teaching is consistently good with some of it outstanding. However, at times, the level of challenge for all pupils, particularly those who are more able, is too variable. Although the quality of marking is good overall, too little attention is paid to encouraging pupils to act on the advice provided. Best practice in teaching is not yet routinely shared.
- Leadership and management are good with some significant strengths evident. The strong focus on improving teaching, through careful monitoring of performance and implementation of well-chosen improvement strategies, has paid dividends. Further, pupils' progress is tracked and monitored robustly through regular, accurate assessment and subsequent analysis of this information. This is a key factor in the improvements evident in pupils'

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progress. The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of the vast majority of pupils well. However, the provision for the very small number of pupils who display challenging behaviour is not always tailored closely enough to their needs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of good and outstanding teaching through:
 - ensuring that the level of challenge provided for all pupils is consistently high, particularly those who are most able
 - encouraging pupils to take time to reflect on teachers' comments on their work and put this advice into practice
 - ensuring the essential components of outstanding learning are widely understood by all teachers
 - sharing more widely across the staff team the best practice found in the school and that identified beyond.
- Review and revise the provision made for pupils with acute and challenging needs.
- Strengthen communication and consultation with parents and carers about all school matters, including the school's work in behaviour management.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

From entry to the school, where attainment is variable, to the end of Year 8, all groups of pupils make good progress in their learning. At the end of Key Stage 2, the mid-point through the school, pupils' attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics. Through good teaching, this steadily improves, so that by the end of Year 8, attainment in both core subjects is beyond that expected for this age group. This represents good progress overall and confirms the view of the majority of parents and carers. The school monitors pupils' progress diligently and is driving up achievement at Key Stage 2, recognising in particular that too few more-able pupils achieved the higher Level 5 in mathematics in 2011. Suitable measures have been put in place, with current Year 6 pupils' progress more in line with expectations this year. By the end of Year 8, pupils' attainment is formally tested in both English and mathematics with results above national expectations for this age group.

The school's highly effective support for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, results in equally good achievement. A variety of recovery programmes,

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including a 'stepping up' programme for lower school entrants, use of the school's 'Aspire' unit to re-engage potentially disengaged learners and targeted support from effective teaching assistants combine well to successfully narrow the gaps. The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is impressive, as noted by several parents and carers. One parent commented, 'Patience, determination and persistence has paid off with my child and the results are fantastic.' Consequently, by the end of Year 8, these pupils make better progress than their counterparts nationally and the gaps with the performance of other groups are rapidly closing. Typically, in most lessons, pupils want to succeed and enjoy their work because a variety of well-chosen learning activities fire their imagination and hook them into learning. The school's reading improvement strategy is proving effective in raising standards in literacy. Creative use of electronic books has an appeal for many boys; regular reading through a whole-school reading programme and individual support for weaker readers, all have made an impact on the improvements evident in reading across the school.

Quality of teaching

Through a determined focus on improving the quality of teaching as the main priority in raising achievement, teaching has steadily improved to a consistently good standard overall. Most parents and carers feel that teaching is good and this was endorsed at inspection; most teaching is good and some outstanding. There are some constant strengths evident in teaching, including consistently good planning, positive relationships with pupils and the use of interesting, varied activities in lessons to appeal to different groups of pupils and engage their interest. A small proportion of teaching is satisfactory and in these lessons, some pupils become restless when teachers tend to talk for too long and do not ensure that the level of challenge is correctly pitched at all abilities, particularly for the most able. Pupils are routinely made aware of the steps they should take to succeed in lessons. Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly and provide good commentary in books. However, this is not given sufficient status in that pupils are not encouraged to use and apply this feedback routinely in their successive efforts.

In a highly successful Year 8 history lesson, the pace of learning was rapid from the minute pupils entered the room. The teacher's skilful questioning, together with his choice of learning activities, prompted pupils' reflections on the issues surrounding slavery and the implications of the loss of freedom. The teacher valued pupils' comments and prompted them to extend their responses, ensuring that everyone was included. An excellent blend of teacher comment and pupils' talking ensued. Pupils were visibly growing in their understanding of the issues as the lesson developed. In another excellent lesson, the teacher ensured that pupils of all abilities were engrossed in learning about the Muslim faith through the use of suitable materials and an excellent match of activity to the learning required. Her materials, props and sensitive choice of activities posed questions for pupils who overcame their initial reluctance and engaged fully with the learning. Some of them were beginning to challenge discrimination and stereotypical thinking as the lesson progressed.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are friendly and welcoming, enjoying good relationships with their teachers and each other. The school has established a safe, caring environment in which good attention is paid to ensuring pupils' safety and well-being. The atmosphere in school is orderly and positive; most pupils readily take responsibility and make positive contributions to the life of the school. Attendance is consistently above the national average, reflecting pupils' enjoyment of school.

The school's revised behaviour code, following comments from pupils and parents and carers, is working effectively and having good impact. The school's detailed behaviour records over time and inspection evidence indicate that the vast majority of pupils behave extremely well, both in lessons and around the school; they are polite, cooperative and hardworking, contributing well to the good learning evident in lessons. Pupils are aware of different forms of bullying, including cyber bullying, and express confidence in staff to deal with these issues, should they arise. At inspection, the perceptive comments made from several pupils, 'Most pupils in this school behave really well but there are just one or two who do not and who struggle to cope', was noted and fully endorsed by inspectors. The school has a small number of pupils with complex and acute difficulties and these pupils display unpredictable and challenging behaviour at times. The school's inclusive, caring approach is commendable and while such misbehaviour is dealt with well by staff, who go to great lengths to provide support for these pupils and minimise disruption to other pupils' learning, this places some strain in terms of the school's capacity to address these pupils' needs within a mainstream setting. School leaders recognise that review of provision for this very small group is now necessary.

A significant minority of parents and carers expressed concern at inspection about behaviour. Inspectors pursued these concerns rigorously and found that the vast majority of pupils behave well at all times. However, the school has not successfully communicated this to home, particularly in terms of the effectiveness of their revised behaviour management procedures for the vast majority of pupils.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and leadership team share a vision for the school's future and work effectively together as a cohesive team. Their view of the school's performance is accurate and suitably critical, based on robust monitoring of pupils' progress and a clear overview of the quality of teaching. Improvements in achievement have been prompted by close attention to improving the quality of teaching across the school; there has been careful consideration and implementation of the most useful strategies to support teachers in developing their practice. There is good expertise across the wider leadership team, in particular, in leading the way by modelling outstanding teaching, with the potential for this to be more widely shared across the school.

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The curriculum meets most pupils' needs well and supports strong personal and social development; many lessons and activities observed at inspection promoted empathy and social awareness, encouraging pupils to reflect on social or cultural issues arising today. Activities beyond the curriculum are a particular strength and add enrichment to pupils' experiences. The school's commitment to ensure access to learning for all and tackle discrimination to minimise the barriers to learning for most pupils is strong. However, the school's languages provision for the least-able pupils does not meet these pupils' needs effectively.

The school's governors are knowledgeable and supportive of the school's work. They suitably challenge school leaders and hold them to account. The governing body and school leaders fulfil their statutory duties to safeguard pupils. The close monitoring of pupils' progress and the good achievement of all groups, including those who are potentially most vulnerable, indicate how well they promote equality of opportunity.

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).

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.



18 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gilbert Inglefield Academy, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 3FU

Thank you for the lively and enthusiastic conversations we enjoyed with many of you when we inspected your school recently. You told us that yours is a good and improving school and we agree with you. You told us how much you enjoy your lessons, the curriculum on offer and the wide range of clubs available to you.

We found that the school is well led and managed. Importantly, you are taught well by good teachers and this means that, by the time you leave Gilbert Inglefield, both the standard of your work and the progress you have made are good, which prepares you well for the next stage of your education. Most of you take pride in your work and give your best. We were impressed with how well the vast majority of you behave and get on with your work. You told us that you are well cared for and that most pupils are well behaved in and around school; we saw this during the inspection. Those pupils who do not do this are in a very small minority. However, we have asked the school to review the provision for this small group of pupils to help them further. To continue improving we have also asked your school leaders to do the following things.

- Make sure more teaching is good and outstanding by ensuring that all teachers understand what this means and have the opportunity to observe outstanding lessons.
- Ensure that you are encouraged to follow up comments in your books when they have been marked.
- Improve communications with your parents and carers so that they are kept better informed about the school's work

You can play your part by taking notice of your teachers' comments in your books and making sure you put this into practice in your next piece of work.

Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Judith Matharu
Her Majesty's Inspector

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