

Gilmour Junior School

Whitehedge Road, Liverpool, Merseyside, L19 1RD

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils join the school with standards that are broadly average. They make good progress and at the time of the inspection standards in Year 6 were above average.
- Teaching is at least good and some is outstanding. There is a very positive atmosphere in lessons because of the good relationships between teachers and pupils. This creates an enjoyment of learning which promotes good progress.
- The care and provision for disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who receive additional government funding is very effective, enabling them to make progress at least as good, and sometimes better, than their classmates.
- Pupils really enjoy coming to school because it provides many opportunities for the enrichment and enjoyment of learning. Their outstanding behaviour and contribution to school life are very notable features.
- The headteacher's clear vision and philosophy is at the heart of all that the school has achieved and it is clear that he has the fullest support from the rest of the very committed staff.
- The school's leadership has created systems that support the professional development of teachers, so they continue to improve their skills and help pupils to learn and achieve well.
- The governing body, with new leadership this school year, is effective and is promoting school improvement well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The work set in lessons, particularly for the most able, is not always at the right level of difficulty and so some pupils do not reach their full potential.
- Marking of pupils' work and the establishment of challenging learning targets are not always as detailed as they might be. Pupils do not get enough chances to check their own work and that of classmates.
- Teachers with responsibility for the leadership of English and mathematics are not given enough time to check the quality of teaching in these subjects.

Information about this inspection

- A total of 16 lessons were observed, each of the eight classes were seen by both inspectors.
- A formal meeting was held with representative pupils, as well as informal discussions with pupils during lessons and throughout the inspection. Samples of pupils' work were looked at in detail and some pupils read aloud to an inspector.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, teachers with leadership responsibilities and the Chair of the Governing Body and other representative governors. A telephone conversation was held with a member of the local authority's team who acts as the School's Improvement Partner.
- The views of parents as expressed in the 27 responses to the on-line Parent View survey were taken into account, together with a letter received from the parents of a pupil.
- Staff opinions were gathered from discussions throughout the inspection and from the 16 replies to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence including the school's evidence on pupil progress from their starting points, planning for teaching and learning, self-evaluation and improvement plans, and a range of policies and procedures, including those for keeping pupils safe.

Inspection team

Martyn Groucutt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Coleman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than the average-sized junior school.
- The proportion known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is below average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children that are looked after by the local authority.) At Gilmour Junior School all the current pupils eligible for this funding fall into the free school meals category.
- The majority of pupils in the school are from White British families. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is a little above the national average, as is the proportion who are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The school meets the government's present floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.
- During the current school year a new Chair of the Governing Body has been appointed, while the headteacher and his deputy both announced their retirements from the end of the school year after many years' service at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the level of difficulty in the work set in lessons for pupils, especially the more able, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers use the school's assessment policy consistently, including giving advice on how work could be made even better, and providing time for corrections and amendments to be made
 - further developing the use of self- and peer-assessment of work done in class
 - setting challenging learning targets for pupils so they can better see the progress they have made through the year and make the most of their potential.
- Ensure teachers with responsibility for leading subjects are given more opportunity to check the work being done in classrooms.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school carefully assesses standards in reading, writing and mathematics soon after pupils arrive in Year 3. Over time this shows that on entry standards are broadly in line with those expected for pupils of their age.
- Pupils generally make good progress from these baselines and by the time they leave at the end of Year 6 the proportion reaching and exceeding the standards found nationally compare well with national figures. This is reflected in the standards of pupils' work seen during the inspection and their enjoyment of learning is helping them to sustain good progress. That said, the most able have not always been sufficiently challenged to reach their full potential.
- Standards among the oldest pupils did dip last year, largely the result of temporary staffing issues that have now been resolved. Current attainment is now stronger.
- Information on the progress of pupils is gathered and analysed carefully twice a year. Pupils not making the progress expected of them are identified and additional help given to enable them to catch up.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are given effective support. The proportion receiving additional help at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs who reach the expected standards in both English and mathematics is above the national average.
- Monitoring the progress of pupils who are entitled to free school meals and who attract the pupil premium shows that the gap in their English performance compared to that of others is now small, although it is wider in mathematics. As a group these pupils do better than similar pupils nationally. Last year, 73 per cent reached the expected standards in both English and mathematics by the end of Year 6, compared with 68 per cent nationally. The proportion doing even better is also higher than the national average.
- Pupils develop and use a range of skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics in many areas of learning. Reading is promoted in many lessons and so pupils become confident readers. Their skills are reinforced by the development of wider skills, such as those in the arts or in sport. Consequently, pupils become self-assured young people who are well prepared for the move to secondary school.
- At present there is not an emphasis on setting learning targets that challenge pupils to reach their full potential and enable them to see and celebrate how much they have achieved over time.
- The school is keen to ensure every pupil has an equal opportunity. However, at present the most-able pupils are not always challenged enough to enable them to achieve their very best.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations and work well with their teaching assistants to create effective lessons in which pupils learn and progress well. Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding, enabling pupils to sustain good progress through the school.
- Sometimes, however, teaching assistants work too rigidly with particular pupils and this restricts the help they can give to other pupils in the class and the teacher in general.
- Teachers use the information they have about what pupils have learned and can do to plan lessons that take into account the different levels of ability. Pupils respond very well and in the best lessons there is a real buzz of enthusiasm as pupils discuss their work with a 'talk-partner', a small group, or the whole class.
- Good questioning by teachers allows pupils to express their ideas, which they do with confidence, and also allows teachers to check levels of understanding.
- Pupils develop good skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics, but a prominent

feature of the school is its wider enrichment of learning. This is promoted through music, drama, art, performance and sport and throughout the school there are excellent displays of pupils' work that demonstrate this exceptionally strong element of school life.

- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those who attract the pupil premium funding are well supported because their achievement and progress are followed carefully. This allows these pupils to make better progress than that made by similar pupils nationally.
- An analysis of pupils' work shows that the school's own marking policy is not always fully implemented. For example, sometimes there is no advice on how work could have been made even better or clear targets set to fully stretch them.
- Although it is sometimes done exceptionally well, opportunities in class are missed for pupils to check their own work or the work of others. Where it was observed to be done well, pupils showed what reflective learners they have become.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is exemplary and no time is lost to learning through pupils becoming distracted.
- Some pupils joined the school displaying challenging behaviour but a clear behaviour policy, effectively carried out, helps such pupils to modify their behaviour and become full and valuable members of the school community.
- Pupils get on with others exceptionally well and there is a clear and mutual respect between pupils and adults and so relationships throughout the school are always at least good. One parent said, 'From the moment we entered the building we were met by polite, happy, cheerful pupils and by friendly, approachable staff who worked hard to make our son welcome'.
- It is clear that pupils are extremely proud of their school. This is reflected in the eagerness with which large numbers participate in activities that are organised, sometimes in front of large audiences such as when the samba band played to the crowd at Anfield Stadium.
- Pupils insist that bullying is not an issue and any disputes are settled quickly. They have a good awareness of bullying in its different forms, including cyber-bullying and that based on prejudice. They understand the dangers of misusing the internet and social networking sites.
- Pupils say they feel very safe in school, a view overwhelmingly shared by parents and staff.
- Attendance is good and above the national average because pupils enjoy school so much. Many join in the wide range of clubs and activities that take place outside the school day.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has provided inspirational leadership to the school over many years and during that time he has been well supported by his deputy. High standards have been maintained throughout those years and are a notable feature of the school. The commitment of staff and governors, together with support from the local authority, for example, in making future staff appointments confirm that there is a strong capacity to continue to improve.
- The headteacher's vision of teaching and learning, broadened and supported through participation in a wide range of enrichment activities, remains powerful and the staff's clear commitment to making this a reality remains as strong as ever. It underpins the whole life of the school.
- Subject leadership is rather less effective, which means, for example, that the subject leaders for English and mathematics have had limited time to develop their subjects and check on teaching.
- Monitoring by senior leaders links to the process for setting teachers challenging targets based on the identified needs of the school, as well as supporting their personal professional development. The process for managing the performance of teachers is effective and begins with teachers thinking about their own strengths and weaknesses.

- Teachers have a good understanding of the links between performance and pay, willingly accepting greater responsibility when they move onto the upper pay scale.
- The school reviews its own performance effectively and from this is able to make priorities for improvement. The change over to a new senior leadership has provided the opportunity for a detailed analysis of the direction in which the school is going in which governors have been fully occupied.
- The curriculum provides access to learning for all pupils, irrespective of their starting points and ability. The school is aware that at times challenge for the more-able pupils has not been sufficient and is seeking to address this.
- Parents and carers show good support for the school. Regular contact is maintained through the website and monthly newsletters, while the headteacher has always adopted an open-door policy.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - A new Chair of the Governing Body was appointed last September and provides very effective leadership, well supported by other governors. They have a good awareness of what the data is saying about the performance of the school compared to others and an understanding of teaching and the curriculum, which they rightly acknowledge to be of high quality. They bring a range of relevant professional experience which allows, for example, effective monitoring of the budget, including the additional funding from the pupil premium. They ensure that the resources of the school are focused on teaching and learning. Challenging targets are set for the headteacher, and governors understand the links between teacher effectiveness and rates of pay, and the process for dealing with any inadequate teaching. They ensure that all their statutory duties, including those for safeguarding, are carried out effectively.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104543
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	412473

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Yates
Headteacher	Peter Gibbons
Date of previous school inspection	16 March 2010
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