

Giffard Park Primary School

Broadway Avenue, Giffard Park, Milton Keynes MK14 5PY

Inspection dates	9–10 March 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Strong leadership from the headteacher and her deputy has helped form a team of staff who have transformed the quality of education in the school since the previous inspection.
- The governing body is now extremely well informed about the school's work and provides good support and challenge to leaders.
- Together, leaders have ensured that both teaching and pupils' progress have improved to be good across the school.
- Teachers are very successful in promoting pupils' positive attitudes to learning and set high expectations of their work and behaviour.
- Teachers make good use of the school's much-improved systems for checking pupils' progress to ensure that different groups have work that is challenging yet manageable.
- Disadvantaged pupils make the same good progress as their classmates; a major improvement since the previous inspection.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability is now a significant strength of the school. As a result, these pupils achieve well.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively.
- Pupils behave well, enjoy school and have very positive relationships with each other and with adults. They work very well collaboratively. They rightly feel safe and secure in the school.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start. They settle happily, behave well and make good progress because of good teaching.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all the many improvements made have been fully consolidated, or had time to make a full impact on teaching quality and pupils' achievement. In particular, some inconsistencies in teaching remain. Aspects that are strong in most lessons are sometimes weak in others.
- There are occasional weaknesses in checking pupils' progress during lessons, and in making sure work is sufficiently challenging.
- Inconsistencies remain in the presentation and marking of pupils' work and in aspects of some adults' subject knowledge.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Consolidate the many improvements made in the school, especially by ensuring that teaching is better, by consistently making sure that:
 - the work given to pupils is sufficiently challenging to interest and engage them and ensure good progress
 - teachers check how all groups of pupils are doing during lessons, so that any misconceptions can be addressed in a timely manner
 - teachers ensure that pupils present their work in a more neat and orderly way, particularly in mathematics
 - teachers mark pupils' work accurately, and give them clear pointers for improvement in line with the school's policy
 - leaders organise relevant training to help teachers and other adults to fill any gaps in their subject knowledge.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have worked extremely effectively together to set a clear educational direction for the school. They have promoted high expectations of teaching and achievement and staff have responded well to this. Teachers and other staff now form a very effective team who are committed to improving their practice and increasing pupils' progress.
- The extended senior leadership team have played an increasingly effective role in driving improvements through challenging colleagues and supporting them to make changes. Subject leaders now make a full contribution to helping raise standards in their areas of responsibility.
- A key element in the better teaching and progress, evident throughout the school, has been better assessment systems for checking on pupils' achievement. This information enables leaders to identify how well different classes, groups and individuals are doing, and to spot any issues that arise. Any shortcomings are tackled thoroughly, and teachers are held to account for the performance of their pupils. Where individual pupils are falling behind because of particular circumstances or difficulties, teachers work with the appropriate leaders to put in place tailor-made support to help them catch up.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability has made particularly good use of the tracking of achievement. The leader monitors the progress of individuals meticulously and ensures that they have work tightly matched to their particular needs. This is particularly the case in the resourced provision, where work is adapted to meet accurately the academic, social and emotional needs of pupils.
- Leaders have insisted upon common approaches to managing behaviour and to promoting pupils' attitudes to learning, and these have been very successful. Pupils fully understand them, and try their best to behave well, and work hard, because of the consistent practice by staff, which they see as fair and helpful.
- The school has managed the quality of teaching well. Leaders set targets for teachers that include school priorities as well as the progress of pupils and their own professional needs. Teachers receive good support to reach these targets, for example through training or the provision of extra time, and progression in pay is dependent upon meeting them.
- The school has spent pupil premium money very effectively. It provides tailor-made academic support to eligible pupils, which helps them meet their full potential, in line with their ability. This is complemented by ensuring that these pupils have full access to all aspects of school life, such as after-school clubs and learning musical instruments. Those who have social or emotional issues get extra help in coping, often supported very well by the learning mentors. Any who have had attendance issues have been helped to improve.
- The school provides a wide-ranging and interesting curriculum that supports pupils' enthusiasm for learning as well as their achievement. A strong focus on English and mathematics ensures good progress in these elements, including through good use of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects. The wide-ranging programme in other subjects, with links made between subjects that make learning meaningful to pupils, ensures that they enjoy a broad education.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. The school gives many opportunities to learn about other cultures, languages and religions, and this enhances the promotion of British values such as tolerance and respect. Pupils learn about democracy and participate themselves through elections for the school council, for example. Many pupils have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument, or to participate in different sports, such as badminton. They are introduced to a wide range of literature, for example through taking part in a performance of *Macbeth*. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school has greatly enhanced its provision for sport and physical education through good use of the extra government funding. The school's equipment and facilities have been improved, and staff given training so that improvements will continue in the long term. Alongside this, pupils' experiences have widened and their participation and enthusiasm for sport increased through the employment of specialist coaches, both in lessons and in a wide variety of after-school clubs.
- The local authority has supplied very good support to the school to help it improve. Through rigorous challenge and advice to leaders and governors, it has enabled the school to become self-sufficient in making changes and improving its performance. Governors, in particular, have valued this help.

- Parents are very positive about the school and about what it provides for their children. They particularly value that their children are happy, feel safe and make good progress. Parents feel that the school responds well to any concerns that they have. They are given good information about the work of the school and how their children are getting on.
- **The governance of the school**
 - The quality of governance has vastly improved since the previous inspection. The new Chair of the Governing Body has led colleagues well in establishing good systems to keep them fully informed about the school's effectiveness.
 - Governors have a good understanding of how different groups of pupils are achieving. They know about the quality of teaching, how leaders manage teachers' performance and how they address any issues. This enables the governing body to challenge and support leaders very effectively. The headteacher and her deputy, in particular, greatly value this.
 - Governors have a good grasp of safeguarding and ensure that this has a high priority. Regular training ensures that they keep on top of any new developments.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Systems are well established and supported by regular training for staff. Policies are up to date and reviewed regularly. Links with appropriate agencies are used well to promote best practice. A close check is kept on any pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable, and the school's records show that any concerns are followed up thoroughly. Good links with parents support the school's work in this regard.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **is good**

- Although some inconsistencies remain, the improvements made since the last inspection mean that teaching is good throughout the school. Classes are managed well and pupils almost always meet the teachers' high expectations of good behaviour and hard work.
- The many opportunities that teachers provide for pupils to collaborate in their learning and discuss their thinking are very effective in promoting good progress in lessons, in fostering positive relationships and in improving pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- The teaching of pupils in the resource base is of high quality, carefully matched to individuals' needs, and ensures that these pupils make good progress.
- Teachers generally explain things well to pupils so that they know what they have to do and how to do it. This means little time is wasted and learning is brisk and effective. Teachers make very good use of technology, such as interactive whiteboards or visualisers, to clarify their explanations and to engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm. A group of pupils in Year 6 agreed that they enjoyed lessons because teachers made learning fun, and were always patient in helping them if they failed to understand.
- Good use is made of skilled teaching assistants to help pupils learn, both in small groups outside the classroom, and in class lessons.
- Teachers' good explanations, and those of teaching assistants, are generally based on secure subject knowledge of what they are teaching. Occasionally, however, there are gaps in subject knowledge that mean explanations are unclear so that progress slows. For example, some adults in Key Stage 2 have problems in teaching the new programme for phonics (letters and the sounds that they make). The leadership team have identified this and extra training is planned to address the issue.
- Teachers and other adults generally keep a close eye on how pupils are getting on during lessons. They check that all pupils understand what they are doing, and intervene promptly to help any who are confused. Adults also frequently challenge pupils to refine their work through challenging questioning, and encouragement to take it to the next level. All this supports pupils' good progress. Occasionally, this monitoring of progress is not systematic enough, and the teacher does not pick up that some pupils are confused quickly enough, so that their progress is hampered.
- Teachers make good use of the information about pupils' achievement to plan work for different groups that is at the right level of difficulty for them. The most-able pupils, in particular, are given more difficult work and they enjoy tackling this and take a pride in their success. The school also works with other schools to provide particular sessions for the most able, for example in mathematics, where they work with similarly able pupils on challenging projects. This means that they often make rapid progress. Very occasionally, the work given to some groups lacks challenge for some pupils and then they lose concentration and do not make the progress they should.
- Although teachers are consistent in their expectations of hard work and good behaviour, they do not

always insist enough on pupils maintaining a high standard of presentation. In some books, the work is often untidy. Particularly in mathematics, untidy setting out of a problem sometimes means pupils lose track of what they are doing, and make unnecessary mistakes.

- The school uses regular homework well to support pupils' learning in the classroom. The system now used is particularly effective because it engages pupils' enthusiasm, and promotes their positive attitudes to learning.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. In accordance with the school's marking policy, they often give useful tips to help pupils improve in the future, and provide chances to put these into practice. However, this practice is not consistent, and sometimes pupils do not have a timely opportunity to put their teachers' good advice into practice. Occasionally, the marking of mathematics is inaccurate, and does not promote to pupils the importance of being accurate in this subject.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Good systems are in place to keep them safe and they feel secure and happy in school as a result. They are very confident that the adults will take care of them if there are any problems. They particularly value the work of the learning mentors in dealing with problems and ensuring that behaviour is good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when using the internet or when on the roads. They have been taught about bullying and know how it differs from other misbehaviour. They say that it does happen in school occasionally, but say that adults quickly sort out such incidents, and Year 6 pupils gave examples of this from their own experience. They understand about different kinds of bullying, such as racism or homophobic bullying, for example, and strongly expressed their distaste for these. Pupils said they would be quick to provide support or seek the help of an adult if they felt another pupil was being bullied or was unhappy.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. A consistent approach by staff to managing behaviour ensures this is the case. Pupils understand the sanctions and rewards that are in place and feel they are fair and effective. Pupils say that behaviour has improved in the last year or so.
- Those pupils who have difficulty in conforming to expected patterns of behaviour are given high-quality support to help them improve. This ensures that they do not disturb the learning of others, and that they are able to make progress themselves.
- Pupils have good relationships with each other and with the adults in school. They collaborate very effectively in their learning when required. They are sensitive to each other's opinions and listen attentively to each other and to adults.
- Pupils are keen to learn and work hard. They take a pride in their success. When they encounter difficulties in their work, they show persistence and do their best. They are very resilient in coping with setbacks, happily correcting their mathematics or making improvements to their writing when adults point out this is needed.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected in their good attendance. The school works successfully with any pupils whose attendance is weak to help them attend more frequently.
- The breakfast club provides a cheerful and healthy start to the day for those pupils who attend. The good behaviour and positive relationships evident here continue through the day.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Pupils make good progress across the school. Weaknesses in progress that were highlighted at the previous inspection have been overcome. Standards are rising. By Year 6, pupils are well prepared for moving on to secondary school.
- The large majority of children enter the early years with skills and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. By the end of Reception in 2015, an above-average percentage of children reached the early learning goals in most areas. This was an improvement on previous years. Information about this year's cohort suggests they are making similarly good progress.

- Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 achieve well. Pupils in Year 1 are improving their skills in phonics. Results of the national screening check in 2014 rose to be above average. In 2015, the results of national assessments at the end of Year 2 were average; these were the highest scores for several years. Pupils at the end of Year 6 generally attain standards a little above average. In 2015, standards were a little below average but this group began the key stage with lower standards, and included an unusually high proportion of pupils with significant special educational needs. Their attainment represented good progress from their starting points.
- Disadvantaged pupils now make similarly good progress to their classmates across the school. Gaps between their achievement and that of pupils nationally are closing. The school's effective work to make sure these pupils receive support that is carefully matched to their needs means they are doing much better than at the previous inspection.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress. The provision for them is now managed much better than in the past, and they receive teaching that meets their particular needs well. This is particularly the case for pupils in the resource base. Their complex needs are met extremely well, so they make good progress in the light of their starting points and their particular difficulties.
- The most-able pupils make good progress. They are given more difficult work and are challenged to do well in lessons, and respond well to this. They achieve high standards for their age.
- Boys and girls achieve equally well. An apparent weakness for girls in mathematics in the results of national tests in 2015 is not shown in the attainment of current pupils. On the whole, girls attain slightly better than boys in the subject, although boys are making slightly better progress and are closing the gaps that exist.
- Pupils from different ethnic groups, including those who speak English as an additional language, make the same good progress as their classmates.

Early years provision

is good

- Good teaching ensures that children make good progress and are well prepared to start Year 1 by the end of Reception. Teachers and other adults continually check on children's progress so that they are able to plan activities that help them learn well.
- The early years leader manages the provision well. Staff work together as an effective team. Improvements and refinements in provision have made progress more consistent, resulting in the above-average attainment by the end of Reception last year.
- The adults provide a wide range of interesting activities that engage children's interest and enthusiasm. These include good opportunities to develop and reinforce literacy skills and to practise numeracy. There is a good balance between adult-directed activities and those children choose for themselves.
- A driving force in children's learning is the way that adults watch their play and intervene to extend their thinking, encouraging children to improve their vocabulary and to practise their speaking skills.
- In directed activities, adults give children clear explanations and question them well to help them understand. Teachers plan activities to develop children's progress systematically. Children do well in phonics, for example, because they are taught in ability groups where activities match children's stages of development and enable everyone to progress well.
- In a mathematics session, children improved their understanding of subtraction because the teacher clearly illustrated her explanations with practical examples. She gave children toy penguins for them to physically model a particular question alongside the written version. This helped them to more fully understand the written 'number sentences', as well as engaging their enthusiasm.
- Good use is made of the outside area. Even on a rainy day, children enjoyed using umbrellas, and then experimented with scooping rainwater from puddles with different containers. They shared equipment sensibly, and talked enthusiastically to each other about what they were doing. Skilled questioning from a teacher helped them extend their vocabulary as well as their physical skills and their understanding of the world.
- Children are happy and settled in the early years. They behave well and rightly feel safe and secure. The good programme of induction and good links with parents and other settings contribute to this. Close links with the nearby pre-school setting, which most children have attended, contribute to the good start children make in this school.

School details

Unique reference number	110381
Local authority	Milton Keynes
Inspection number	10002337

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	385
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Neilson
Headteacher	Emma Donoghue
Telephone number	01908 617 868
Website	www.giffardpark.milton-keynes.sch.uk
Email address	office@giffardpark.milton-keynes.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	15–16 October 2013

Information about this school

- Giffard Park is larger than the average primary school.
- Children in the early years attend full-time in the two Reception classes.
- About 70% of pupils are White British, with the rest coming from a range of other ethnic heritages. About one in 10 pupils speaks English as an additional language.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with disability and those who have special educational needs. This is in the process of phased closure. It currently caters for eight pupils with moderate learning difficulties in Years 4, 5 and 6. Many of these pupils have complex needs. Most spend their mornings in the resource base, and join mainstream classes in the afternoons.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is a little above average. However, the proportion of such pupils with high levels of need is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium is similar to that in most schools, at around 20%. The pupil premium is extra government funding to help the education of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, or children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school provides a breakfast club and an after-school club for its own pupils. A privately run before- and after-school provision, which shared the site at the time of the previous inspection, has since closed.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been considerable staff changes, particularly in senior positions. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher, and new leaders for early years and for the provision for pupils who have special educational needs or disability, for example, are now in post. The governing body has had many changes in personnel, including a new Chair.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning during visits to all classes in the school. Several of these observations were made jointly with either the headteacher or the deputy headteacher. Shorter observations were made of the teaching of phonics in small groups, and of tailor-made support given to small groups of pupils.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. They also spoke informally to staff and pupils around the school.
- The team took account of 25 replies to the online survey, Parent View, as well as looking at the school's own survey of parental opinion. Inspectors also considered 83 replies from the online survey of pupils' views, and examined 45 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors checked a variety of documents, particularly those related to safeguarding and pupils' progress.
- The team observed pupils in assembly, at breaktimes and lunchtimes, and around the school. An inspector visited the breakfast club.
- Inspectors analysed samples of pupils' work in their books and on displays, and listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Steven Hill, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Margaret Louisy	Ofsted Inspector
Hilary Goddard	Ofsted Inspector

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