

INSPECTION REPORT

GARSTANG COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Garstang

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 119300

Headteacher: Mr. M. McCusker

Reporting inspector: Dr. B. Blundell
23868

Dates of inspection: 24th - 25th September 2002

Inspection number: 247992
Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Community Primary

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Birch Road,
Garstang, Preston

Postcode: PR3 1HT

Telephone number: 01995 603622

Fax number: 01995 600394

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. D. G. Halford

Date of previous inspection: January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
23868	Dr. B. Blundell	Registered inspector
9002	Mr. D. Ashton	Lay inspector
29261	Mrs. P. Ward	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
Strathblane House
Ashfield Road
Cheadle
Cheshire
SK8 1BB

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Garstang Community Primary School is a school for boys and girls, aged 4 to 11, situated in Garstang, Lancashire. There are 247 pupils on roll; the school is about the same size as most primary schools. The ethnic background of the pupils is largely white with UK heritage; a minority of pupils have Asian and Chinese heritages. One pupil is at an early stage in the acquisition of English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need is below the national average, and the proportion of pupils identified within the school as having special needs is also below average. The nature of pupils' special needs includes specific learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupil mobility is relatively low. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Garstang Community Primary is a very effective school. Standards in English, mathematics and science for pupils by the end of Year 6 consistently exceed national averages by a large margin. The overall quality of teaching is very good, and leadership and management are excellent. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils by the end of Year 6 consistently attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are at least well above national averages; this is because of the school's high expectations.
- Leadership and management by the headteacher, senior management team and governing body are excellent; the school has a very clear educational direction.
- The overall quality of teaching is very good; it is enhanced by the school's use of new technology.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour and the excellent relationships throughout the school promote a happy environment for learning.
- Parents' views of the school are excellent.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

What could be improved

- The inspection team identified no areas for improvement.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has improved very well since the last inspection. The school was last inspected in January 1998. The overall quality of teaching has improved, with a much higher proportion now being very good or better. Standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 have improved from being above the national average to well above the national average. The key issue to improve the quality of music teaching has been fully addressed. The issue to develop the role of the curriculum co-ordinators has been met; their role is now effective. The school development plan has improved appropriately. The school is not complacent and has the capacity to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A*	A	A	A
mathematics	A	A*	A*	A*
science	A*	A*	A*	A*

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 in the national tests in 2001 were well above the national average in English, and very high in mathematics and science, being in the top five per cent of schools nationally. Compared to that in schools of a similar type, pupils' attainment was again well above average in English, and very high in mathematics and science, being in the top five per cent of similar schools. Over the three years from 1999 to 2001 taken together, pupils have left the school with standards nearly one year ahead of pupils nationally in English, and eighteen months ahead of pupils nationally in mathematics and science.

Standards attained by pupils by the end of Year 2 in 2001 were well above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards in these were also well above average compared to those in schools of a similar type. Over the three years from 1999 to 2001 taken together, pupils have left the infant phase nearly three terms ahead of pupils nationally in reading, nearly two terms ahead in writing, and over two terms ahead in mathematics. The school's targets are appropriately ambitious.

In the work seen during the inspection, standards for pupils at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 were well above national expectations in reading, writing, mathematics and science. For pupils at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6 standards in design and technology, history, geography, art and design and physical education were above national expectations. In information and communication technology, standards were well above national expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven; in music standards for seven year olds were above national expectations, and, for pupils aged eleven, they met those expectations. Children aged five and under are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals. (The Early Learning Goals are the nationally expected standards for children at the end of Reception). Pupils' achievement is very good overall and all pupils are fully included. Standards at this school are sufficiently high.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to the school are very good; they really enjoy coming to school and taking part in lessons. Particular strengths in pupils' attitudes include their enthusiastic application to their work and love for learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour, both in and out of the classrooms, is very good. Playground mentors look after other pupils appropriately at lunchtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is excellent; relationships are excellent both between pupils and with adults. There is a mutual respect between staff and pupils. Pupils have many responsibilities; for example, playground equipment monitors and litter monitors. This all adds to their personal development.
Attendance	Pupils' attendance is above the national average. Unauthorised absence is below average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is very good; the skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught. Particular strengths in teaching include the manner in which teachers share learning objectives for lessons with pupils, teachers' high expectations and good class management. Classroom support assistants work well with teachers in planning lessons. The school meets the needs of all pupils well. All pupils are fully included. Particular strengths in pupils' learning include their concentration, productivity and pace of learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are very good throughout the school. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements. A particular strength is the way the school nurtures its pupils both academically and in terms of pastoral care.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good overall; learning support assistants support pupils well. Pupils' individual educational plans thoroughly support pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language.	This is very good. The small numbers of pupils are well provided for in all aspects of the school's life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is very good. The school very successfully provides for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Assemblies are inspiring and prompt pupils to focus on the world they live in. The school's work on "Campaigners for Change" (a study of people who have championed particular causes) is having a most profound effect on pupils' moral development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school looks after its pupils very well. Child protection procedures are currently good.

The school works very well indeed in its partnership with parents. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team are excellent.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The manner in which the governors fulfil their responsibilities is excellent. They bring an appropriately wide range of expertise to the running of this school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school's evaluation of its performance is excellent. It thoroughly analyses its work in external national tests, and uses the findings to improve standards effectively.
The strategic use of resources	The strategic use of resources is excellent. The school always considers usefulness for increasing learning when purchasing items.

Particular strengths in leadership and management include the commitment and vision of the headteacher and senior management team. The school's secretary is most efficient and helps ensure the smooth running of the school. Lunchtime assistants and catering staff create a very happy atmosphere at the mid-day break. The accommodation is well maintained by a dedicated caretaker and cleaner. All are valued highly as integral parts of the school's team. The school's application of the principles of best value is excellent.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are happy with behaviour at the school. • They feel comfortable approaching the school. • Parents feel that the school sets high expectations. • They are very happy indeed with the way that the school is led and managed. • They judge the overall quality of teaching to be good. • Parents feel that the school helps their children to mature and to be responsible. 	No issues raised.

The inspection team agrees with parents' extremely positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils by the end of Year 6 consistently attain standards in English, mathematics and science that are at least well above national averages, because of the high expectations that the school has of them.

1. Over the last three years taken together, pupils have left the school, on average, nearly one year ahead of pupils nationally in English and eighteen months ahead in mathematics and science. The attainment of pupils currently in Year 6 exceeds national expectations in all three subjects.
2. Over the three years from 1999 to 2001, pupils have left the infant phase, on average, with standards nearly three terms ahead of pupils nationally in reading, nearly two terms ahead in writing and over two terms ahead in mathematics.
3. If we look at the performance of pupils currently in Year 6 and compare it with their results when they were in Year 2, we find that they have generally made very good progress.
4. In English, the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening of pupils currently in Year 6 are all well above national expectations. Pupils in Year 6 explore their understanding of the features of narrative poems effectively. They use reading journals consistently and well. They explore archaic vocabulary in stories and plays. They engage positively in discussion. Pupils at the end of Year 2 check their work carefully for sense and punctuation. They use linking words appropriately; they are very aware of their targets for improvement.
5. In mathematics, pupils aged eleven use a range of calculation strategies with great confidence. They understand terms such as 'square root' and 'median' and use their knowledge of these to solve problems. Pupils are clear and concise in their mental strategies and are able to explain clearly how they arrive at their answers. Seven year olds recognise different coins and use them appropriately to work out their change in the "Toy shop". They understand the key words in problems such as how many are there *altogether*, or how many are *left*? Pupils generally have a sufficiently prompt recall of their multiplication tables and this helps their learning.
6. In science, pupils aged eleven carry out investigations well, using bar charts, tables and line graphs to illustrate their findings appropriately. They engage in experiments to find out how friction or the lack of it can be put to good use. For example, groups of pupils investigate which material will make the best road surface for an escape lane on a steep hill; others find out the most effective lubricant to be used to move heavy loads, such as stone for the pyramids. Pupils throughout the school record their work in a sensible scientific manner, and draw reasonably accurate diagrams with correct scientific vocabulary, and this practice is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Seven year olds undertake thoughtful investigations to test the waterproofing of materials.
7. Pupils' attainment is greatly aided by the setting of individual pupil targets in literacy and numeracy. This is carried out for all pupils, including those having special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language; the targets are revised very regularly. Parents are aware of targets and are able to help their children to achieve them. In all classes, teachers apply the school's high expectations to the pupils in their classes; this greatly helps pupils' learning and enables pupils to reach such high standards.

Leadership and management by the headteacher, the senior management team and the governing body are excellent; the school has a very clear educational direction.

8. The headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior management team and governing body are leading the school skilfully in a very appropriate educational direction. They are always striving to improve and look at ways to further enhance their pupils' learning. The recently appointed deputy headteacher, who is an excellent classroom practitioner, has made a good start in promoting staff development. The senior management team sensibly includes both literacy and numeracy co-ordinators. The school is very well placed for further improvement; complacency does not exist here. The school's priorities as identified in the effective school development plan are most appropriate.
9. The senior management team is most effective and works well together. It has monitored teaching and learning through the school, giving teachers constructive written and verbal feedback, with areas for improvement indicated where appropriate. The role of the curriculum co-ordinators, which was a key issue at the time of the last inspection, has improved. They are now more closely involved in monitoring their subject areas.
10. The governing body is very committed and brings a breadth of expertise to the school. It is effective in its function in monitoring the work of the school. Governors have an appropriate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are energetically pro-active. Governors are regular visitors to the school, and monitor the delivery of the curriculum appropriately. They are most actively involved in setting school targets, particularly with regard to those applying to the higher levels of pupil performance.
11. The school's previous large budget surplus has been used wisely to provide more extensive facilities for information and communication technology and this has had a positive impact on pupils' learning.

The overall quality of teaching is very good; it is enhanced by the school's use of new technology.

12. Teachers at Garstang Primary School are committed, conscientious and most capable. The overall quality of teaching throughout the school is very good, with many examples of excellent teaching being seen. Overall, teaching was excellent in forty two per cent of lessons seen, very good in forty six per cent and good in twelve per cent of lessons. Teaching standards have improved very considerably since the time of the last inspection, with the proportion of very good or better teaching seen, more than doubling. Pupils' successful learning matches the effective teaching throughout the school; pupils rise willingly to the teachers' high expectations.
13. Pupils, including those having special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, know and understand the precise purpose of their lessons. At the outset, teachers explain in appropriate language what the learning objectives are for the lesson. At the end of most lessons, the learning targets are looked at again to see how far they have been achieved. This was a particular feature of nearly all literacy and numeracy lessons observed, and such practice is very effective in increasing the rate of pupils' learning. In a numeracy lesson for pupils in Year 2, pupils showed an excellent awareness of what they had learned at the end of the session. Time is not wasted in lessons, because all pupils realise that they have a learning target to meet. In one well taught literacy lesson for the children in a mixed age group Early Years class, however, the pace, at times, could have been brisker.

14. Planning is particularly effective throughout the school. Nothing is left to chance. In a very well taught history lesson for children in the Reception class, the planning was meticulous, with nothing being left to chance. By the end of the lesson, pupils had a very clear insight into how we change as we get older. Teachers manage their classes efficiently; expectations are high in terms of both behaviour and standards of work for all pupils, including those with special educational needs.
15. The teachers use information and communication technology skilfully to help pupils' learning. The school greatly benefits from the provision of three interactive whiteboards; these are routinely used in the school library and two of the classrooms to help pupils' learning and enhance understanding and motivation. Plans are afoot to spread their provision to all classrooms. Additionally, pupils are being taught to control advanced robots and to storyboard for a range of audiences. The latter work was of a very high standard.

Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour and the excellent relationships throughout the school promote a happy environment for learning.

16. Pupils' attitudes are at least good. They behave very well indeed and want to learn. They mirror the enthusiasm of their teachers, and really enjoy coming to school.
17. Pupils all take part in question and answer sessions eagerly, as in a Year 6 numeracy lesson on "ways to arrive at the answer sixteen". They are very keen to explain what they are doing and demonstrate their thorough understanding.
18. Relationships both between pupils and with adults are excellent. Staff, who are always calm and courteous, treat pupils respectfully and this is reciprocated by the pupils. Pupils help around school, with the playground mentors, for example, looking after younger children. Pupils are active in the vibrant school council meetings and make a positive contribution to the school's facilities.

Parents' views of the school are excellent.

19. The school values its parents especially highly; this is reciprocated by the parents who think that their school is wonderful! They are very supportive of its work, are regular helpers in class and raise a considerable sum of money annually. One hundred per cent of the questionnaires sent out by the school were returned, representing every pupil in the school.
20. At the parents' meeting held prior to the inspection, it was difficult to get parents to say anything in any way critical. The only exception to this was on the subject of homework, where some felt that the school set *too much* and some felt there was *too little*.

The school's overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

21. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is a strength of the school. The school provides well for the study of different faiths. The school's provision for pupils' moral development is excellent. Pupils study the great effect that 'lone voices' have had on change in the world. For example, Martin Luther King, Chico Mendez and Nelson Mandela are studied in assemblies as "Campaigners for Change". Pupils are given the opportunities to reflect on how they can bring about change, if they look at matters from a moral perspective. Appropriate anti-bullying and anti-racism policies are in place; the school promotes racial equality well. Adults set a very good example indeed to pupils.

22. The result of the very good provision for pupils' social development is seen in the excellent relationships around school. Cultural and multi-cultural provision are very good. Provision for pupils' development in these areas is greatly enhanced by the school's work in looking at the wider world that we inhabit. The school has exciting plans afoot to link with a school in Ghana using web cameras. Existing links with a school in Sweden give the pupils a wider view of the world and an awareness of other cultures.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- 24 The team did not identify any issues for improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	11	12	3	0	0	0	0
Percentage	43	46	11	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	247
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	24

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.0
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	24	17	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	23	24
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	40	40	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98(100)	98(100)	100(100)
	National	84(83)	86(84)	91(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	24	24
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	40	41	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98(100)	100(100)	100(100)
	National	85(84)	89(88)	89(88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	16	19	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	16
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	35	35	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100(100)	100(100)	100(100)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	15	16
	Girls	19	19	19
	Total	32	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	91(94)	97(100)	100(100)
	National	72(70)	74(72)	82(79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	209	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.7
Average class size	30.75

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	147

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	540,041
Total expenditure	534,674
Expenditure per pupil	2,122
Balance brought forward from previous year	97,814
Balance carried forward to next year	20,968

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 100%

Number of questionnaires sent out	247
Number of questionnaires returned	247

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	35	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	38	2	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	30	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	43	6	3	4
The teaching is good.	76	23	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	43	5	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	25	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	23	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	65	31	3	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	85	13	2	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	27	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	42	6	1	9