



**Office for Standards
in Education**

Inspection report
Gamesley Community Primary School

Derbyshire Education Authority

Dates of inspection: 23-24 February 2004

This inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996 and was deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act

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Contents

Section	Page
Basic information about the school	iv
Introduction	1
Main findings	1
Key issues	2
Inspection findings	3
Standards achieved by the pupils	3
The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	4
The quality of education	5
Leadership and management	6
Implementation of the action plan	7
Appendix – Information about the inspection	8

Basic information about the school

Name of school:	Gamesley Community Primary School
Type of school:	Primary
Status:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Headteacher:	Mr S Gillham
Address of school:	Grindleford Grove Gamesley Glossop Derbyshire SK13 6HW
Telephone:	01457 853721
Name and address of appropriate authority:	The governing body, address as above
Chair of governors:	Ms J Williams
Local education authority area:	Derbyshire
Unique reference number:	112693
Name of reporting inspector:	Mrs D Holdaway HMI
Dates of inspection:	23-24 February 2004

Introduction

1. Gamesley Community Primary School is situated in Glossop and serves a housing estate with high levels of unemployment and many social problems. The school is smaller than other primary schools and the number of pupils on roll has declined from 169 in 2001 to 131. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. Almost half the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals which is more than twice the national average. There are 23 pupils identified by the school as having special educational needs, including one who has a Statement of Special Educational Need. The overall level of attainment when the pupils enter the school is below average.
2. The school was inspected in July 2001. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.
3. The governors drew up an action plan to address the key issues from the inspection of July 2001. The school was visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMI) on seven occasions to monitor the progress being made.
4. In February 2004 two HMI inspected the school, assessing the standard of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of July 2001.

Main findings

5. In accordance with section 14 of the School Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures, since it is now providing an acceptable standard of education for its pupils. The main findings of the inspection are:
 - the end-of-Key-Stage 1 test results in 2003 were broadly similar to those of the previous year. Most pupils achieved the level expected for their age in reading and writing, and all the pupils did so in mathematics and science. However, achievement at the higher levels was well below that of most schools;
 - the end-of-Key Stage 2 test results were generally worse than those of the previous year except in mathematics, and were low compared with other schools. In all three subjects, barely half of the pupils reached the expected Level 4. There were only two instances of pupils reaching the higher Level 5, one in mathematics and one in science. The boys' performance was especially poor in all subjects;
 - the pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and are on track to achieve the nationally set Early Learning Goals. They make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1 and are working at age-appropriate levels. At Key Stage 2, the pupils' progress is broadly satisfactory but a significant number are still underachieving; standards in Year 6 remain well below average;
 - pupils who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress and their individual education plans are appropriate for their needs;
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- the pupils' attitudes to work were good overall and their behaviour was very good in over half of the lessons. The pupils' attendance has improved significantly and is now slightly above the national figure;
- provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong and show an awareness of their place in the wider community. The school council involves pupils in making suggestions for improvements to the school's environment;
- the quality of teaching has improved significantly since July 2001. The teaching was very good in one lesson, good in three, satisfactory in seven and unsatisfactory in the remaining one. In the most successful lessons, the teachers had sound subject knowledge, used questions to check the pupils' understanding, and applied a range of teaching techniques. In these lessons, relevant learning objectives were shared with the pupils and frequently referred to throughout the lesson. In less effective lessons, teachers relied too heavily on worksheets that were not well matched to the pupils' needs;
- suitable assessment procedures are in place although some are recently introduced, and have yet to have an impact on the planning of work and standards achieved. There are weaknesses in the use made of data to plan work which matches accurately the current learning needs of the pupils;
- the curriculum is appropriately balanced and is based on national requirements and guidance. There has been a marked improvement in the presentation and content of pupils' writing, drawing on practical experience, observations and research in different subjects. There are too few opportunities for investigations, problem solving and practical applications in mathematics and science;
- the headteacher provides satisfactory leadership and management. A number of important measures have been introduced to help raise standards and improve teaching; for example, introducing assessment measures and improving the consistency of lesson-planning. There are clear lines of responsibility within the leadership team but monitoring and evaluation have not been sufficiently systematic or rigorous. Governors provide a good level of support for the school. They know its strengths and weaknesses and take an increasing role in decision-making.

Key issues

6. In order to improve the pupils' quality of education further, the governors, headteacher, senior managers and staff need to:

- continue to raise standards in all National Curriculum subjects particularly in the practical aspects of mathematics and science;
 - improve the use of assessment data to plan work matched to the pupils' learning needs;
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- raise the quality of teaching further to a consistently good standard.

Inspection findings

Standards achieved by the pupils

7. The end-of-Key Stage 1 test results in 2003 were broadly similar to those of the previous year. The proportion of pupils reaching the nationally expected Level 2 rose to 76 per cent in both reading and writing, which compared well with similar schools, but was below the national figure. Only one pupil achieved the higher Level 3. In mathematics and science the school maintained the achievement of the previous year, with all pupils gaining Level 2 in both subjects. However, no pupils achieved Level 3.

8. In the tests at the end of Key Stage 2, only 42 per cent of the pupils, and none of the boys, achieved the nationally expected Level 4 in English, a lower figure than the previous year. None of the pupils achieved the higher Level 5. In mathematics, just over half of the pupils achieved Level 4 which was an improvement on the previous year and one pupil gained Level 5. In science, only 38 per cent of the pupils achieved Level 4, which was far worse than the previous year; one pupil achieved Level 5. Boys performed significantly worse than girls in all three subjects. These results were poor compared with those of other schools, and, in part, were due to the frequent absence of the teacher at the time and a legacy of unsatisfactory teaching.

9. The pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage. They settle quickly to routines and develop good learning habits, such as listening and responding appropriately. The pupils are quickly introduced to letter formation and early reading skills. Every opportunity for learning is seized by the teacher and her assistant and as a result new learning is consolidated effectively. During registration times, the teacher expects the pupils to respond to initial letter sounds or apply new number knowledge to real situations, for example the number of pupils staying for lunch. The pupils are on track to achieve the nationally set Early Learning Goals.

10. The pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stage 1. Their writing has improved since the autumn term and they compose and punctuate sentences correctly. Spelling is accurate and their attempts at unknown words are phonetically plausible. Handwriting is increasingly legible and neat and the pupils write for a broad and varied range of purposes. A particularly helpful strategy has been the emphasis of writing skills in different subjects. The pupils' descriptive writing has been successfully improved by asking them to write about real experiences. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory though the able pupils could achieve more. Pupils in Year 2 add three digits to a total of 20, solve simple written problems involving money, read weighing scales, and make sensible estimations of number. The pupils do not have enough opportunity to solve mathematical problems in a practical setting nor do they apply their developing knowledge and skills to the real world. The ability of pupils to explain their understanding of mathematics is limited.

11. At Key Stage 2, the pupils make broadly satisfactory progress overall. The pupils have benefited from whole-school writing weeks which have provided structured opportunities to practise a variety of styles, such as instructional and persuasive writing. There is a wide range of ability in Year 6 with some pupils working at levels well below

those expected for their age. However, a significant number of pupils are writing complex sentences with correct spelling and punctuation. The pupils' handwriting is frequently joined and consistently formed with some pupils developing their own styles. The pupils write in paragraphs and are developing engaging openings and imaginative descriptions. In mathematics, the pupils identify prime numbers, successfully compare fractions and decimals and calculate proportional fractions. They are beginning to understand some of the principles of shape but their knowledge is insecure. The pupils in Year 6 lack the mathematical vocabulary to express their knowledge and understanding.

12. At both key stages, attainment in science is variable. The pupils cover a range of work but there are too few opportunities for on-going observations, investigations and enquiry. There is an over-reliance on worksheets and the pupils have not developed a suitable range of recording techniques. The worksheets do not meet the individual learning needs of the pupils; some find the work too difficult because of the gaps in their prior learning while others are bored because they are insufficiently challenged. Scientific vocabulary is limited and there are few examples of scientific displays around the school.

13. The pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and are supported well both in the classroom and in small groups withdrawn from classes. Class teachers keep individual education plans up to date with specific and manageable targets which are regularly reviewed. However, the teachers do not make sufficient allowance for the pupils' individual targets in their day-to-day plans. The LEA appropriately supports the school with a behaviour support team and a teacher for special educational needs.

The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The pupils' attitudes were good overall and their behaviour was consistently good or better. During the 12 lessons observed, the behaviour of the pupils was very good in six, good in five and satisfactory in one. This is a significant improvement since the inspection in July 2001 when there were incidents of disruptive behaviour in every class. The pupils have positive attitudes to learning and they are proud of their work. Pupils in the Foundation Stage are taught how to share and consider other people's needs. In lessons throughout the school, pupils were attentive and maintained good levels of concentration. The pupils in Year 6 are excited by challenging work and are genuinely interested in their learning but can be discouraged when gaps in their knowledge prevent them from completing tasks.

15. Around the school, the pupils' behaviour was good, representing a further improvement, and there were numerous instances of courtesy and friendliness by individuals. The deputy headteacher has worked extensively with lunchtime supervisors to successfully implement a reward system for lunchtime behaviour. The school council has advised in the purchase of playground equipment. There have been no exclusions this academic year.

16. Attendance is above average. At the time of the last inspection attendance was poor. Reward systems and improved liaison with parents have been effective measures. The support from the LEA's educational social worker has been particularly effective in reducing persistent absenteeism.

17. Provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In their written work, the pupils show imagination and empathy for others. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and respect the school's code of conduct. The adults in the school model positive relationships well and there is mutual respect between the adults and pupils.

The pupils have an awareness of democracy and representation through the school council and they show an awareness of their place in the wider community. Assemblies contribute well to the pupils' growing understanding of spirituality and morality. The pupils behave respectfully as they enter the hall, listen with concentration and contribute sensibly. The older pupils model good behaviour for the younger pupils and are complimentary about the efforts of others.

18. A variety of visitors come into school to talk to the pupils or demonstrate for them. During a literacy week focusing on report writing, a journalist talked to the pupils about appropriate questioning techniques and the use of a video camera. Adults from the community talked to Year 6 about their memories and experiences in the Second World War. The school is developing a programme of educational visits linked with the pupils' curriculum studies; pupils in Years 1 and 2 visited a local market; Year 3 went to a museum as part of their history studies; Year 5 have recently been to the theatre to experience "Hamlet For Children" and Year 6 pupils experience a residential period for team building and outward bound activities. There are a number of after-school clubs and seasonal inter-school competitions which are all well supported by pupils.

The quality of education

19. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some examples of good and very good teaching. A particularly consistent picture is that of very good teaching in the reception and Year 1 class. Overall, teaching was very good in one lesson, good in three, satisfactory in seven and unsatisfactory in one. This is a significant improvement since the July 2001 inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory or poor in almost one quarter of the lessons observed.

20. The teaching in the Foundation Stage illustrated many of the best features of the teaching. Early literacy and mathematical skills were taught in a lively and systematic way and the pupils were given purposeful and enjoyable tasks to develop their understanding. The classrooms and outdoor play area provided well-organised and stimulating environments which were used imaginatively to expand and consolidate learning. Thorough knowledge of the pupils led to specific levels of questioning of individuals and sensitive support where necessary. The pupils responded particularly well to the praise given by adults and they reflected the positive relationships modelled by the teacher and teaching assistant.

21. There is a consistent whole-school approach to lesson-planning, which clearly identifies the learning objectives, the activities and the opportunities for assessment in plenaries. The planning is supported by schemes of work which provide direction for curriculum breadth and progression. Marking is specific to the learning objectives and helpful to the pupils. Good analysis of the end-of-year test results led to a clearer view of what the pupils did not know. The co-ordinators have identified the weaknesses in curriculum planning and less effective styles of teaching and learning. In English, this awareness led to a systematic approach to the teaching of writing styles and the development of pupils' experiences in order to contribute to the content of their writing. The initiative to assess the pupils' work at fixed periods throughout the year has resulted in good evidence of the pupils' progress and of those pupils who are failing to achieve their potential. Teachers throughout the school make good use of pupils' self-evaluation during lessons. However, sometimes the teachers did not check that the pupils' understanding was secure.

22. Overall, the teachers' medium-term planning correlates more closely with the assessed needs of the pupils than the day-to-day planning, which is not yet precise enough. It often fails to determine the type of activities that different groups of pupils need in order to practise new skills or consolidate learning. A particular weakness was evident when published materials formed the basis of the lesson. Where this occurred, the broad aims of the lesson were met but the specific learning needs of individuals were not. Therefore, some of the pupils were not challenged enough while others who had significant gaps in their prior learning could not successfully achieve what was asked of them.

23. The teaching assistants were generally effective and have a developing role within the school which makes good use of their strengths and expertise. All of the assistants worked independently with groups of pupils and they were most effective when they had been briefed beforehand by the teacher. In very good examples, the teaching assistant had effectively contributed to the planning with the teacher. Where assistants were less effective, confusion occurred because they had been insufficiently involved in the planning and they misunderstood the specific learning requirements for their group of pupils.

Leadership and management

24. The headteacher and acting deputy headteacher provide satisfactory leadership and management. The headteacher has made a significant personal contribution to the improvement of the school's ethos. He commands the confidence of parents and the local community, and has sustained the morale and developed the team spirit of the staff. He has developed the role of the leadership team so that its members are capable of leading initiatives. The team has a clear understanding of the strengths and weakness of the school and has identified appropriate strategies for future improvement, particularly in the raising of attainment in English. Over time, the headteacher has challenged and successfully reduced the level of unsatisfactory teaching and has, importantly, improved the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. A series of staff meetings and training sessions has helped to raise the staff's expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, the leadership team, and the headteacher in particular, has not been systematic in monitoring or evaluating the school's progress. Evaluations of the impact of the newly introduced strategies have not focused enough on the outcomes of what pupils can do as a result of the changes. Rigorous and challenging monitoring of the quality of teaching has been inconsistent. Although the obvious weaknesses have been successfully addressed there is an over-optimistic view of teaching standards which mistakes satisfactory teaching for good.

25. Governors provide a good level of support for the school. They know its strengths and weaknesses and are confident to challenge where necessary. The committees have begun to play a central role in questioning the headteacher and senior staff about progress on key issues and they are appropriately aware of the need to raise standards further. Individual governors have linked with classes and curriculum areas to provide them with a more detailed understanding of the school. There are good relationships between the staff and the governing body. Both the governing body and the headteacher have a clear understanding for the management of the school's budget and have a realistic and prudent long-term plan.

26. Subject leaders of English, mathematics and science have an increased role in the monitoring of classroom practice and standards of achievement. The leadership of English is very good and has had a direct influence on improving the progress that the pupils make in their reading and writing. The monitoring of mathematics and science has not yet

consistently resulted in the required improvements. In both subjects, there is a lack of practical investigations and application of knowledge and skills to real-life situations.

27. The two newly qualified teachers have mentors and have access to appropriate training. Regular observations of them, as well as their own observation of good practice, have developed their skills and broadened their expectations of pupils.

28. The LEA continues to provide satisfactory support for the school. A representative from the behaviour support team visits weekly and the education social worker has been successful in reducing persistent absenteeism. The special needs service provides effective support for the teachers and their pupils. The advisory service has been effective in meeting the identified curriculum needs of the school and demonstrating a range of teaching styles.

Implementation of the action plan

29. The inspection report of 2001 required the school to address five key issues. These principally related to: raising standards; improving teaching; providing a curriculum according to national requirements; securing effective leadership and management and improving the behaviour of pupils. Overall, reasonable progress has been made and most tasks have been completed, but there is still work to do.

30. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been consistently implemented in all classes. The pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress overall. Standards in Year 6 have improved as a result of the eradication of poor teaching; the pupils have rapidly adopted a positive attitude to learning and are keen to work hard to achieve as well as they can. Assessment is used effectively to identify the overall weaknesses in the pupils' knowledge and individual pupil tracking clearly indicates the progress pupils make.

31. Training and paired observations provided by the advisory service have successfully developed the teachers' range of teaching methods and improved their subject knowledge, particularly in the core subjects. Monitoring in the form of lesson observations and scrutiny of work is accepted as part of the school's culture. The teaching is consistently satisfactory and there are examples of good and very good teaching from some individuals.

32. The curriculum is appropriately balanced and is based on national curriculum guidelines. Provision for the pupils who have special educational needs follows the national Code of Practice.

33. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. People with responsibility have a clear understanding of what is required of them and take an increasing role in decision making.

34. The pupils have responded positively to the higher standards of work expected of them. They are polite to each other and they are proud of their efforts. Although the legacy of poor progress in the past is still evident, the majority of pupils are now making satisfactory progress.

Appendix – Information about the inspection

The school was inspected under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 by a Registered Inspector and a team of inspectors in July 2001. The inspection was critical of many aspects of the work of the school and, in accordance with that Act, the school was made subject to special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education.

The school was visited by HMI in January, April and September 2002 and in January, June and October 2003 to assess the progress it was making to implement its action plan and address the key issues in the inspection report of July 2001.

In February 2004, two HMI returned to inspect the school for two days. The inspection was carried out under section 3 of the School Inspections Act 1996, which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 10 inspection under the same Act.

Twelve lessons or parts of lessons, one assembly and three registration sessions were inspected. The pupils were observed at break and lunch times and samples of their work were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff and governors, and informal discussions were held with other staff and pupils. A wide range of the school's documentation was scrutinised. Account was also taken of the evidence from previous monitoring inspections.

The inspection assessed the quality of education provided and the progress the school has made, in particular in relation to the main findings and key issues in the inspection report of July 2001 and the action plan prepared by the governing body to address those key issues.

