



Gorringe Park Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102654
Local Authority Merton
Inspection number 276752
Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006
Reporting inspector Christopher Gray

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Sandy Lane
School category	Community		Figges Marsh
Age range of pupils	3–11		Mitcham CR4 2YA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	020 8648 1451
Number on roll (school)	441	Fax number	020 8646 7539
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Pauline Hoare
		Headteacher	Alan Coode
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 1–2 November 2006	Inspection number 276752
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is bigger than most primary schools. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language are higher than found in most schools. There are more pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities than most schools have. Pupils' mobility is high.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

This is a school which, while having many strong points, has significant weaknesses. It enables its pupils to develop very well as responsible and mature individuals, but they do not achieve academically as well as they should. This means that the school's overall effectiveness is inadequate.

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. They clearly enjoy school very much and appreciate interesting experiences such as visits out of school. They make an outstanding contribution to the running of the school and to their community. Senior students enjoy setting examples of mature behaviour. As one girl said, 'If we are sensible, the younger children will learn from us but, if we're messing about, they'd do the same'.

Pupils' academic development is not strong in this way. They attain below average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave school. Their achievement is inadequate because, given their starting points, they are capable of reaching significantly higher standards. The overall impact of teaching is inadequate because it is not helping pupils to reach the standards they are capable of achieving. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and make many lessons interesting, but they do not challenge the pupils sufficiently and frequently accept work that is not good enough. Teachers do not use marking or assessment consistently to set work which challenges pupils at their own level. An important exception is information and communication technology (ICT), where good provision enables pupils to reach the expected standards. The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Many children enter the nursery with low levels of communication because they have little English. Children make satisfactory progress, though standards in language remain low by the time they enter Year 1.

The school has faced enormous challenges in recent years because of reorganisation. The staff have been successful in creating a secure and happy community that is very popular with parents, as the large response to parents' questionnaires shows. The extended services have helped enormously here and parents praise the support it gives to many families. But academic performance has not kept pace with these developments. Standards have fallen and the school's leaders have been slow to analyse why. Efforts to raise attainment have lacked clear direction, adequate planning and consistent approach. Performance management is not used to improve the quality of teaching. The school does not have an adequate capacity to make the necessary improvements on its own.

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations of the quality and standard of work that pupils can produce, to enable them to reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Enable teachers to make better use of assessment and tracking pupils' progress in planning for what they need to learn next.
- Give clearer direction to school improvement, so that goals are clearly recognised, ways to get there are mapped out and methods agreed for measuring when they are reached.
- Establish systems of performance management for staff in order to improve the quality of teaching.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards by Year 6 are significantly below average and are not high enough. They fluctuate from year to year without any clear analysis to explain why. Pupils' achievement is inadequate because, given more challenge and higher expectations, they could achieve much more. Their academic development has not kept pace with their personal development. Pupils speaking English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve at similar rates to other groups of pupils. Standards by Year 2 are low and fluctuate from year to year.

Pupils' performance in science was very low until the present year. New resources and additional staffing raised standards in Year 6, but it is not clear that this rise will be sustained or that it took place in other year groups. In the Year 6 national tests for 2006, standards in English were low. Pupils' work shows that they do not take enough care with presentation or spelling and often forget to use joined-up writing. Teachers do not challenge sub-standard work sufficiently, so there is little evidence of improvement. Progress in mathematics is inadequate because teachers do not give pupils work which is matched to pupils' ability.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They enjoy school and want to do their best; one Year 5 pupil said, 'I wish there were more lessons in a day'. Attendance is broadly average. Behaviour is good. Pupils feel safe in the school and report that there is virtually no bullying. Peer mediators help to settle any differences, and, where this is not possible, pupils are confident that any adult will help.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school council influences decisions in the school. In order to be chosen as senior students, pupils write applications and are interviewed. One girl said, 'When you get older and want a job you'll know what it is like to be interviewed'. Although this makes an important contribution to pupils' economic well-being, their literacy and numeracy skills are

inadequate. Pupils know about healthy lifestyles, as is shown by their sensible choices at school lunch, and they enjoy physical activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Many lessons are interesting and there are some examples of good teaching but teaching and learning are inadequate overall. This is because the work is not sufficiently well matched to the pupils' abilities. Staff use interactive whiteboards well to make learning fun, as was seen in a Year 3 science lesson, when pupils watched a slide show of animals' skulls, to learn about different functions of teeth.

The activities given to pupils are often inadequately linked to what the teacher wants them to learn. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. Marking contains helpful guidance in some classes, but subsequent work does not show that these comments have been acted on. Use of target setting is inconsistent. Teachers frequently give pupils of different ability the same work, especially in mathematics. Average and higher attaining pupils' books contain much work which is all correct, suggesting that greater challenge should have been given. In science and English books, there are many examples of worksheets which require only a limited response from pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils report that they enjoy the lessons that are exciting, for example, a life-like drama session that brought 'Macbeth' to life. Educational visits successfully enhance learning. After-school clubs and lunch time activities are popular and provide good enrichment. The extended services help increase pupils' enjoyment of school. Statutory requirements are met, though curriculum planning does not always meet the needs of all pupils in matching activities to their abilities. ICT is effectively used and pupils develop competent skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care, guidance and support offered to pupils are satisfactory overall, with strong points in pupils' welfare. Pupils throughout the school feel safe and free from bullying. Relationships are strong, and, as a result pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, 'It's like being at home' and 'Teachers respect you' were typical comments from pupils. Pupils who are at risk are identified and well supported. The school works very well with parents. Arrangements for child protection are secure as are those for health and safety. The significant weakness of this aspect of the school's work is that it does not have effective procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils, so that appropriate targets cannot be set to ensure that pupils are achieving as well as they could.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

The strong focus on pupils' personal development and establishing a community school, where all pupils are valued and included, have resulted in an environment in which pupils feel happy and safe, relationships are strong and pupils' behaviour is good. The high turnover of staff has been managed well and the school runs smoothly from day to day. The extended provision, such as before- and after-school care, is popular with parents and they are happy with the school.

Despite these strengths, leadership and management are inadequate because too little attention has been paid to improving pupils' progress and raising standards. Although the school has a broadly accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses, the effectiveness of self-evaluation is inadequate because the school does not have the systems and procedures to make a significant difference. The headteacher, staff and governors recognise the need to raise standards but the school improvement plan lacks focus and does not clearly identify the outcomes the school is looking for; action plans to support priority areas are not well developed. Middle managers are not given sufficiently clear direction to enable them to be fully effective in their roles. Where action has been taken, for example, in improving standards in science, there has been some success, but the sustainability of this is not evident.

The arrangements for monitoring of performance are inadequate. Staff do not have up-to-date job descriptions and performance management is not used to improve the quality of teaching. The impact of initiatives is not evaluated so that the school does not know whether they are being implemented effectively. Data are not sufficiently well analysed to enable challenging targets for pupils' attainment to be set. This means that the school is not giving adequate value for money.

Governors are committed and supportive of the school and have contributed effectively to developing the school's links with the community. They are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses but are not sufficiently involved in strategic decision making or in challenging low standards.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We enjoyed meeting so many of you during our recent visit to your school. You were very polite and friendly and showed how well you behave. Those of you in Year 6 set very good examples to younger pupils and are very responsible in the way you help round the school. Thank you for making us so welcome.

Your school is a very pleasant place to be. The buildings are attractive and there are plenty of good resources, such as those for ICT. You enjoy your lessons and you develop good relationships with all adults. Many of you told us what fun your headteacher is. The adults care very much for you and many of you enjoy after-school activities.

In spite of this, we found that the standard of education you receive is not good enough. You do not do as well in your work as you should do, especially in English, mathematics and science. This is because the work is not always hard enough. There are times when you do not produce your best work or are careless with your writing or spelling. Both you and your teachers need to work together so that you can achieve more. We have asked them to give you more activities that challenge you and to help you to improve in the way they mark your books and set targets for you.

The standards you achieve in national tests change a lot from year to year in different subjects. Although your school's leaders try to find out why, they have not yet enabled you to achieve at a steady rate in all subjects. We have decided that your school requires 'special measures'. That means that it needs more help from outside to raise the level of the standards you reach.

We hope you will continue to enjoy your time at Gorrings Park and that you will be able to join the staff in the effort to reach higher standards.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Gray
Lead inspector