



Gilbertstone Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103201
LEA Birmingham
Inspection number 276868
Inspection dates 7 December 2005 to 8 December 2005
Reporting inspector Paul (Alex) Baxter RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Clay Lane
School category	Community		Birmingham
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		West Midlands B26 1EH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4644664
Number on roll	418	Fax number	0121 4648648
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Vic Jackson
Date of previous inspection	22 November 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Fiona Laurie

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Gilbertstone Primary is a large school and is located in South Yardley, four miles south east of Birmingham. The majority of pupils are of White British origin. An above average number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. Fifteen pupils are at an early stage of learning English and receive specialist support. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average. Most children start school with average levels of attainment. There have been a lot of changes to teaching staff in recent years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school judges its effectiveness as satisfactory and inspectors agree. It is a well maintained and attractive place where pupils are valued equally and relate well towards each other and to supportive adults.

Standards and progress are satisfactory overall. Children progress well through the Foundation Stage Unit (nursery and reception) and through Years 1 to 2 where standards have improved. National tests at Year 6 in recent years have shown that some pupils have not reached their targets, especially in mathematics. Work seen at the inspection shows that more pupils are now reaching their targets. However, targets do not always set high enough expectations and now need to be made more challenging in order to raise standards and progress further in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' behaviour and relationships are good and reflect the good personal care from all staff. Improved attitudes and recent sharpening of assessment are also beginning to support pupils' learning more effectively. Attendance is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning and the curriculum are satisfactory and some teaching is good. However, learning is weakened on occasions by less effective teaching, especially in Years 3 to 4. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage Unit is good.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and are being strengthening as leadership teams implement the headteacher's priorities for improvement. She receives good support from senior staff. Governors fulfil their duties satisfactorily. Procedures for self-evaluation and monitoring performance are also satisfactory but the information revealed could be used more effectively to ensure maximum achievement by all groups of pupils. Many changes in staffing have resulted in insufficient school improvement since the last inspection. However, as a result of measures taken to provide greater stability, the school is on course to maintain recent improvements. It now has the capacity to improve and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve pupils' progress through Years 3 to 6.
- Further improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning, especially in Years 3 to 4.
- Use information from monitoring and evaluation more effectively to ensure that all groups of pupils make the best possible progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Most pupils, including higher attainers, pupils with learning needs and pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make satisfactory progress in relation to their capabilities by the time they leave the school.

Standards are broadly average on entry to Year 1, above average by the end of Year 2 and are average by the end of Year 6. Children make good progress in the Foundation

Stage Unit, especially in their personal, social and emotional development. Good progress continues through Years 1 and 2 as pupils build on the firm foundations of the previous stage. The results of Year 2 assessments in 2005 were above average and even higher in reading and writing. Pupils are currently progressing satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6 as a result of some better teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6, and better support given by senior managers to inexperienced teachers. This is helping to overcome the gaps in pupils' knowledge caused by the many changes of staffing in the past. There is scope for further improvements in teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4 and in national tests at the end of Year 6. In 2005, although standards were average in English, test results were below average in both mathematics and science.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Social and moral development is good. Young children develop proper sensitivity about their feelings and about how to relate to others. Pupils have a good understanding of spiritual and cultural matters and appreciate other cultures through their work in art and design and religious education, for example by celebrating Eid and Diwali. In response to improving teaching behaviour is good and attitudes to learning are positive. These need to be sustained consistently in all classes to improve pupils' learning. Race relations are good and learning mentors help pupils with behavioural difficulties and address bullying very effectively. Pupils are polite and enjoy harmonious relationships at play. They take responsibility seriously, for example when serving on the school council and also when organising rotas for using play equipment. Older pupils fulfil their roles well as mediators and monitors, deriving pleasure from helping others. Attendance is satisfactory, although the school is not rigorous enough in dissuading parents from taking term-time holidays with their children. Pupils learn well about living healthily and safely, aspects promoted strongly through the school's aims. They contribute to the community effectively through charitable fundraising decided democratically. Achievement is satisfactory in the key skills required to prepare pupils for future education and working life. Recent improvement in English, particularly reading, is strengthening this, as is the focus on improving further achievement in mathematics.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning have been strengthened this term and are now satisfactory. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage Unit and mostly good in Years 1 and 2. It is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6, with significant elements of good teaching particularly in Years 5 and 6. Pupils' learning is benefiting from much greater stability in staffing, but this needs to be sustained to impact to best effect on pupils' achievement. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of their pupils and lessons are well

planned. These elements strengthened pupils' understanding of fair testing in a science lesson in Year 5. Class management is also good, and assessment is used effectively to ensure that lessons are modified to meet the needs of all pupils. These qualities were seen in a mathematics lesson in Year 2 where pupils assessed their own learning to help them to improve. Where teaching is less successful, particularly in Years 3 and 4, and at times in Year 1, pace is often slow, pupils are not clear what is expected of them, and lack of effective class management results in pupils losing concentration. In addition, the quality of marking and use of assessment are too variable.

Teaching assistants are used well, particularly in supporting pupils with learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, meets requirements and is broad and balanced. There is a strong emphasis on English, mathematics and science. Pupils' work in art and design, recognised through the school's Artsmark Gold Award, is highly valued through displays that bring colour and stimulation to all parts of the school. Curricular planning largely follows national guidance, but is modified, particularly in good lessons, to meet the needs of pupils.

The recent focus on reading has resulted in higher than average attainment in reading at Year 2 and is having a positive impact on learning in other areas of the curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT), as with other subjects, is suitably integrated across the curriculum. However, the pupils' literacy, and particularly their numeracy, skills are not used and developed to best effect in promoting learning in other subjects. Extra-curricular activities extend learning opportunities appropriately. Learning activities in the Foundation Stage Unit are well planned and enriched through colour coded learning bases. Opportunities for outdoor activities have improved this term. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties is good and provision for extra curricular activities is satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's provision of care, guidance and support promotes satisfactory achievement across the school. Warm relationships strengthen the good personal care. Links with parents and other agencies are becoming stronger, but as with many good procedures which have started recently, it is too early yet to measure the full impact on pupils' learning. Examples of good links include the well attended 'breakfast club', the specialist support for pupils who are at a very early stage of learning English and health visitors who contribute to the provision that underpins the award of the Healthy Schools' Standard. Improved procedures have led to the swift identification of those with learning difficulties and disabilities and support to ensure these pupils achieve as well as they should. The needs of pupils at risk are well understood and child protection procedures are secure. Pupils help in protecting their own safety by putting forward ideas for improvement through the school council.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leadership of the Foundation Stage and for pupils with special educational needs is good. Governors give satisfactory support.

The way that leadership and management has tackled some major barriers to learning, including issues of staffing, and put the school back on the right track shows it has the capacity to improve further. Assisted by newly formed management teams and the involvement and support of parents, a positive start has been made in improving standards. Leaders of subjects are also playing a more prominent role in raising standards in their areas of responsibility. However, the school is well aware that there are still weaknesses and its self-evaluation is accurate. Whilst there have been notable improvements in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, it recognises that progress and standards are still not good enough in Years 3 to 6. What is happening in earlier years, however, is providing a good base for progress in Years 3 to 6 to match that being made lower in the school. In addition, teamwork has improved and senior management has been more proactive this term in improving teaching and learning and pupils' behaviour. Monitoring and evaluation are now satisfactory and the benefits from taking quicker action to rectify weaknesses serve as a good example of what it is possible to achieve if that urgency is continued.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Gilbertstone Primary School Clay Lane Birmingham West Midlands B26 1EH

8 December 2005

Dear Pupils

We very much enjoyed visiting your school, seeing how you learn and talking to you about your work. Thank you for contributing to the inspection.

We were pleased to find a number of strengths in the school

- We liked your good attitudes, behaviour and relationships and the way you are listening to the caring adults in your school. We agree with what you told us about more of you trying to do your best and working well with each other.
- We noted the strengths in the Foundation Stage Unit (nursery and reception) where children achieve well. We also noted the good work in Years 1 and 2.
- We noted improving teaching and learning in other parts of the school, especially Years 5 and 6, and how this is helping you to enjoy school more.
- We were pleased too by the way your parents support the headteacher and appreciated the staff of the school.

What we have asked your school to do next

- We feel some of you could achieve more and want teachers to help you to improve the progress that you make through Years 3 to 6 so that you reach higher standards by the time you leave the school.
- We want your headteacher and senior managers to continue to bring about changes quickly so that you make the best possible progress. Yours faithfully

Alexander Paul Baxter (Lead Inspector)