



The Giffard Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 104383
LEA Wolverhampton
Inspection number 277145
Inspection dates 14 June 2006 to 15 June 2006
Reporting inspector Carol Worthington AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hordern Close
School category	Voluntary aided		Hordern Road
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV6 0HR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 556447
Number on roll	235	Fax number	01902 556447
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Brian Davis
Date of previous inspection	15 March 2006	Headteacher	Mrs Ann Lombardi

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The Giffard school is an average-sized primary school. Nearly 60% of pupils come from one of the most deprived areas of Wolverhampton, and the percentage of children eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that expected of children this age, particularly in communication skills. 45% of pupils are from ethnic minority groups, which is much higher than average. A very small number are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties, disabilities and statements of special needs is below the national average. Since the previous inspection, the school has had three headteachers. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2005.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The inspectors agree with the school's view that its effectiveness is satisfactory. Although pupils make good progress overall in reaching well-above-average standards by the end of Year 6, progress is uneven. This has been caused by past staffing difficulties in Year 3 and too much being left to the latter stages of Key Stage 2 to reach those standards. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage remains good and children make good progress. The school has considerable capacity to improve, largely due to the very good leadership of the headteacher who, in her first year, is bringing about much change. Governors give sound support.

Teaching and learning are now good overall in lessons, but there are still some inconsistencies. Some marking could be more helpful in pointing out clearly what pupils need to do to raise standards further. The setting of individual targets is in its early stages and the full impact is yet to be felt. The key role of subject leaders and their professional development have been somewhat neglected. This is now being addressed but the process is in its infancy. The subject leaders' role in checking the quality of teaching and learning and in making sure that the best practice is highlighted is underdeveloped. When judged at all levels, leadership and management are satisfactory.

Personal development and attendance are also satisfactory; spiritual development is good and pupils enjoy school. Behaviour is generally good in classrooms, but not always at playtime. The number of fixed-term exclusions was high in the headteacher's first term, but has dropped considerably now that behaviour has improved.

The curriculum and care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Some pupils say their concerns are not fully taken into account.

Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the setting of individual targets so that pupils know what is expected of them and teachers can measure progress more accurately.
- Ensure that all marking makes it clear to pupils what they need to do next to raise standards further.
- Continue to develop the role of subject leaders and ensure good practice is shared throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with standards well below those expected of children at that age. They make particularly good progress in personal, social and emotional development which enables them to learn well as they get older. Progress throughout

the Foundation Stage is good. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with below-average standards but continue to make good progress to reach average standards by the end of Year 2. Progress throughout Key Stage 2 has been uneven for some years. Severe staffing difficulties in Year 3 have led to a dip in progress but this is always made up later in Key Stage 2, particularly in Year 6 where progress is always consistently very good. Problems with progress in Year 3 have continued for most of the current academic year and only this term have new teaching arrangements begun to make a difference to pupils' progress.

Standards attained by 11-year-olds in the 2005 national tests were well above average in English, mathematics, and science, as they have been for the last three years; standards for the current year look similar. Pupils regularly meet and exceed challenging targets. Pupils achieve well throughout the school, consolidating literacy and numeracy particularly well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who do not speak English as their first language achieve equally well as other pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory, with some good features. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual development has particular strengths, reflecting the committed and caring Catholic ethos. Behaviour in classrooms is generally good and is a contributory factor to pupils' good progress. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when there was some unsatisfactory behaviour in a few lessons. Playground behaviour is sometimes too boisterous for some pupils and the school has responded by providing quiet areas for them. The number of exclusions was high at the beginning of the year, but there have been very few since then. Attendance is satisfactory and pupils enjoy school. Pupils eat healthy snacks at playtime and many choose balanced meals at lunchtime. They contribute satisfactorily to the school and wider communities through the work of the school council and involvement in parish activities. Pupils are involved in fund-raising skills linked to school council initiatives and make a satisfactory contribution to the community through their charity work. Pupils are prepared well for the next stages of their education because their progress is good and they have built a secure foundation of skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT).

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good and now fairly even across the school. Learning is good and pupils achieve well. Strengths include the good start in the Nursery and reception classes and consistently good and sometimes better teaching in Years 5 and 6, where progress accelerates. Staffing difficulties in Year 3 have been a matter of concern to the school and to parents. School leaders have worked hard to overcome this and early

signs this term are that this situation has improved. In an outstanding lesson, children in the reception class made very good progress in their understanding of number and other areas of the curriculum. In another outstanding lesson, the Year 6 teacher provided a high level of challenge for pupils learning to apply their knowledge of electrical circuits. The quality of marking is inconsistent. At best, it offers advice and guidance about how to improve, but sometimes this is lacking. Pupils do not always respond to the advice given and that is not followed up. Teachers make assessments regularly to check pupils' progress, but procedures for using assessment information to plan work for individual pupils are not yet firmly established. The quality of teaching support is good, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is satisfactory, with some good features in cross-curricular application. The variety of visits to places of interest is satisfactory, and these, as well as visitors, add interest and enjoyment to pupils' learning. The range of after-school clubs is satisfactory, too. These are centred on sporting activities and help to promote pupils' physical health. Pupils learn how to stay safe and be healthy through a sound personal, social and health education programme, which includes visits from the police and fire services. They learn about the dangers of substance abuse in lessons.

Younger pupils benefit from an early start in learning about the importance of road safety. The school is proud of the award made by the local authority for the quality of its sex and relationships education programme.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school offers a satisfactory level of care, guidance and support. Procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring their safety are in place. The school takes its commitment to promoting growth and learning within a Catholic environment very seriously. The school encourages safe and healthy lifestyles in trying to ensure that all can swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave school, for example. Firm measures to deal with some unacceptable behaviour are having a marked effect this year. Pupils generally feel safe on the playground. They recognise there are occasional instances of bullying but are confident that these are dealt with quickly and effectively. However, a few pupils say that they feel they are not listened to well enough when they report racist comments, some of which have been made in the past year. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress and guiding them towards improvement are underdeveloped. Breakfast Club, which caters for about 40 pupils, has improved the attendance and punctuality of some. The school makes good arrangements to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and the very small number of children who are at an early stage of learning English.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher in her first year has made an impressive start on improvements necessary after a period of frequent changes of school leadership and some staffing difficulties. Her leadership is very good. She has set a very clear direction for improvement from a thorough and accurate analysis of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a full parental and pupil survey. The targets set in the school improvement plan are realistic and already having a significant impact on the working of the school. Training for ICT has had a significant effect on teachers' knowledge and pupils' learning. Whilst pupils' progress in Year 3 is improving this term with new teaching arrangements, it is too early to measure any longer-term effects. The school is, however, determined that future teaching arrangements should prevent reoccurrence of recent difficulties. The headteacher's good initiatives include productive work in partnership with the local authority and two neighbouring schools. This has resulted in subject leaders understanding better how to improve their management of their subjects, but the school recognises that this remains an area for improvement, particularly in the effective monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning and the sharing of good practice existing in the school.

The school's good emphasis on equality of opportunity is a major factor in pupils of all abilities and from different ethnic backgrounds achieving well.

The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. The governing body discharge its duties satisfactorily and the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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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	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	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	3	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	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	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	2	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

Thank you very much for your help during the inspection. We found many things that were good about your school. You learn well and reach high standards because your teachers are good. Adults in school look after you well, but could track your progress more consistently. Most of you behave well in lessons and this helps you to learn. Some of you find the playground a little bit rough and noisy, but you now have a quiet area if you want to avoid this. Your headteacher is working very hard to make your school an even better place.

We think that the school could do better in using the information it has about how well you are doing to plan work that helps you to learn. We would like teachers to make helpful comments on your work when they mark it to tell you how to improve, and you should take notice of this yourselves. We want the school to listen to you more carefully when other children say or do something that upsets you, but you can help by making sure you tell an adult in school if someone says something that is wrong.

We wish you well.