



Garston Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104620
LEA Liverpool
Inspection number 277191
Inspection dates 19 September 2005 to 20 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mrs Dee Brigstock CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Holman Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Liverpool
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Merseyside L19 5NS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 427 7517
Number on roll	85	Fax number	0151 494 2078
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs E Lyons
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2000	Headteacher	Mr R Widdowson

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one additional inspector.

Description of the school

Garston is a small voluntary aided Church of England school in Liverpool with just 82 pupils. The number of pupils on roll is falling steadily. Most of the pupils are white British, but about a tenth are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Just one pupil is at an early stage of learning English. Eleven per cent of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities. There are no pupils with a statement of special educational need. When pupils start school their skills and knowledge are much lower than is expected. About 40 per cent of pupils receive free school meals, which is well above average. More pupils than is usual, leave or join the school between the reception year and Year 6. The school works in partnership with two universities to provide placements for trainee teachers. It is designated as a 'Liverpool Healthy School' and as an 'Investor in People'.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' standards and achievement in English and mathematics.

The school judges itself to be good. However, the inspection judges that it is failing to give its pupils an adequate standard of education and currently provides unsatisfactory value for money. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory, because of recently improved leadership and management strategies, and the current focus on improving teaching and learning. Children with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress, but the more capable pupils, in Years 2 to 6, are not doing as well as they could, particularly in mathematics and writing, because teachers have not previously focused well enough on their learning needs. The school knows this and is working with external partners to improve this aspect of the school's work. Children in the reception class enter school with well below average attainment and make very good progress because the quality of teaching and learning is very good. Despite this, most children are unlikely to reach the early learning goals expected of them by the time they enter Year 1.

Pupils' personal development is good. Overall, pupils' care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pupils are very well cared for and they really enjoy coming to school because they feel secure and valued. All pupils are included very well in all the school has to offer. Parents really appreciate this. However, pupils need to have more guidance on how to improve their work. The school's links with local businesses are good and help prepare pupils for their future well. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall, because of the steps taken to secure future school improvement. The work of the governors has improved since the last inspection and now meets all statutory requirements.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, particularly in mathematics and writing, by planning work for each group of pupils, which is more precisely matched to their learning needs.
- Use assessment data more thoroughly to measure and improve the achievement of the higher attaining pupils in mathematics and English.
- Improve leadership and management systems by constructing a longer-term school improvement plan with precise and measurable targets for improvement.
- Consider adjusting the timetable for the school day so that pupils have additional time to learn to write.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Children start school with very weak basic skills. They make very good progress in the reception year and Year 1 because of the very high expectations of their teacher, who designs well-structured learning activities for them. However, over the last few years, pupils have made unsatisfactory progress in Years 2 to 6. In Year 2, results of tests are lower now than they were at the last inspection. In Year 6, standards were slightly higher in English, science and mathematics in 2004, than they were at the last inspection, but compared to pupils' prior attainment, standards in mathematics were significantly low. Results in 2005 show that standards have fallen again, in both English and mathematics and pupils' basic skills, in writing and mathematics, are too low. The school's own data analysis reveals that pupils with learning difficulties make at least satisfactory progress throughout the school, and that it is the higher attaining pupils who are underachieving, and this is confirmed by the inspection. The low level of writing skills is an underlying problem that is holding back pupils' progress in all subjects and pupils' handwriting and presentation skills are poor. To improve in both English and mathematics, more precise, challenging and measurable targets need to be set for the higher attaining pupils.

Since the last inspection, the school has successfully addressed most key issues, for example in raising standards in information and communication technology (ICT). However, pupils' presentation is still not good enough and the use of assessment information to provide greater challenge for pupils of differing abilities needs more work

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school is good at promoting pupils' personal development and well-being. The vast majority of pupils and parents are happy with pupils' behaviour. Pupils are generally polite and well mannered, even when faced with tasks that are a bit too difficult, although occasionally this leads to some low-level disruption in lessons. Pupils say that they enjoy coming to school but the level of attendance is low and falling, as more parents choose to take holidays during term time. In such a small school, this has a significant effect on the attendance rate. The school's procedures for dealing with absence are good. For example, the school secretary makes phone calls to pupils' homes each day to check why pupils are absent and the headteacher writes to the very few parents who are persistently late in bringing their children to school.

Relationships between all members of the school community are very good. Bullying and racism are rare and pupils agree that if they have a problem, the school "sorts it out". Members of the newly formed school council are aware of their roles and some of their responsibilities. For example, one member said "I think I was chosen because I am a good listener."

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. The school has succeeded in teaching pupils about some ethnic communities in Britain and this is an improvement

since the last inspection. Throughout the school, children are clearly happy. The indoor and outdoor environment is very secure and parents are very positive that the school keeps their children safe. Pupils are making satisfactory progress in learning how to stay healthy and the school is providing sound and improving opportunities for them to take additional physical exercise. Although some pupils are underachieving in school subjects, there is much that is good in other aspects of their personal development, and this is a strength of the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The school evaluated the quality of teaching and learning to be good. The inspection found that teaching and learning are good in the reception and Year 1 class but just satisfactory overall, because there is too wide a variation in the quality of teaching. The school's new target, to plan lessons using assessment information, which meet the needs of the higher attaining pupils, is in action. Teachers acted swiftly to improve their planning after receiving advice from consultants from the local education authority. Where this new planning occurs, notably in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, teaching and pupils' learning are good. This was particularly evident in two very good lessons in mathematics. However, this good planning is not evident in all lessons. For example, in an unsatisfactory English lesson, all pupils completed the same worksheet. This was too difficult for some pupils and too easy for others. As a result, pupils made inadequate progress. Teachers now need to use the assessment information they have to plan for each group of pupils consistently, to increase pupils' progress to good.

Teachers' use of ICT has improved a lot since the last inspection, and, where interactive whiteboards are used to introduce lessons, or to illustrate key learning points, pupils are focused and learn well, especially when they have the chance to use the new technology themselves.

The quality of the support from the few teaching assistants is good because they are fully included as members of the teaching team and have regular access to the right sort of training. They are particularly effective when working with children who have learning difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. There is a strong emphasis on personal development and this is effective. The school is providing an increasing range of visits and visitors, and other activities such as modules for the 'Children's University,' which cater well for all pupils' interests and experiences, including the higher attaining pupils, and increase their knowledge and understanding of the world well. There are a good number of clubs for the size of the school.

The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' ability to stay safe and healthy. The governors have had a significant input into this, as they organise younger children's learning in road safety and involve parents and pupils very well in learning how to cook and prepare healthy and tasty meals. Older pupils have very good opportunities to learn about the local economy through making visits to local firms, and working in teams, as part of the school's partnership with 'Young Enterprise.'

The school has rightly recognised the need to plan better connections between subjects so that pupils can practise and improve their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects. This initiative is at an early stage of development and its impact on pupils' progress cannot yet be measured.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are well cared for and there are good procedures to keep them safe. Risk assessments are made for all visits and are up-to-date. All members of staff know their pupils very well and pupils' social development is well supported. As a result, pupils work in a safe and secure learning environment. Older pupils are keen to be 'playground buddies' and look out for other pupils who look lonely or unhappy. The school prefects also take on their extra responsibilities with pride.

Child protection procedures are thorough and staff are alert to signs that pupils may be distressed or anxious. Several staff have qualifications in first aid. There are few incidents of bullying, and those that do occur are dealt with swiftly by staff. Pupils were very sure about this. The good quality of care provided, contributes to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Good personal support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties or who are at an early stage of learning English. Higher attaining pupils, however, need to have more support and guidance, for example through teachers planning learning activities more closely matched to their needs, in order for them to make better progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school judges leadership and management to be good but the inspection judges them to be no more than satisfactory overall. Standards in Year 2 are lower now than at the last inspection, although in Year 6, they have risen slightly in English and science, but not in mathematics. Leadership and management in the Foundation Stage are very good and are leading to a marked improvement in standards for the youngest children.

The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve because changes in the way teachers plan and teach lessons to meet the needs of all the learners are in evidence. In addition, the headteacher is using the services of local education authority and other consultants to help him to pinpoint and put in action developments through more focused monitoring. This has led to the correct identification of several areas for school improvement, including the underachievement of the more capable pupils. As a result,

teachers are now focusing more clearly on raising attainment for this group and building in additional practice in their mathematics lessons, such as data handling, to provide more challenge for these learners and to address areas of weakness. In the very good lessons seen, this was successful and pupils' good learning was clear.

Other strategies to improve pupils' performance, for example through re-arranging the curriculum, are not planned in enough detail because the school improvement plan is inadequate. It outlines developments, which reflect the main findings of the inspection, but does not contain precise measurable targets for either pupils or teachers to attain.

The school's own evaluation of its performance has, until recent improvements in monitoring, lacked accuracy in key aspects and this has hindered improvement. Parents and children are influenced in their judgements on the school's performance more by the good personal development and enjoyment that children have in coming to school than by their achievement.

Governance has improved since the last inspection and the governors, who are very supportive of the school, now fulfil all their statutory requirements. They take an active role in pupils' personal development and well-being through initiating 'Kerbcraft,' a programme designed to improve road safety, and involving both parents and pupils in improving understanding of how to appreciate and provide healthy and tasty food to pupils.

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?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	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?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	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?	2	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	4	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

Thank you very much for helping me when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking with you. I am really pleased that you enjoy going to school.

These are the things I am most pleased about:

- How well you behave, and the good way in which you get on with each other and the adults in school. You are very friendly and helpful and look really smart in your school uniform.
- How well you are using the interactive whiteboards to help you learn new things.
- The interesting visits and visitors you have, that help you to learn about the world around you.

There are some important things your school must do in order to improve.

- I have asked the teachers to help you learn more quickly, and to use all the information they know about you to make sure that the work you are given is not too hard or too easy.
- I have asked the headteacher to find more time for you to practise your writing.
- I have asked all the adults in school to plan how to do these things in more detail.
- A few of you need to come to school more often and always arrive on time.

I did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn. I hope you do very well in the future.