



Giffard Park Combined School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110381
LEA Milton Keynes LEA
Inspection number 278420
Inspection dates 27 September 2005 to 28 September 2005
Reporting inspector Charalambos Loizou AI

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

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|------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| Type of school | Middle deemed primary | School address | Broadway Avenue |
| School category | Community | | Giffard Park |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 12 | | Milton Keynes MK14 5PY |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01908617868 |
| Number on roll | 300 | Fax number | 01908211423 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mr Tony Brown |
| Date of previous inspection | 7 February 2000 | Headteacher | Mr Richard Morgan |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three inspectors.

Description of the school

Most pupils are of White-British heritage and 15% are from a broad range of mixed or minority ethnic backgrounds. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well above average because the school accommodates a Special Educational Needs (SEN) department. The department admits up to 25 pupils from across Milton Keynes who all have moderate learning difficulties and a statement of SEN. Attainment on entry to the reception class is average. There is an above average number of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times. The school accommodates a community centre. This provides an extensive range of out of school activities and clubs. Many pupils participate in these as well as those provided by the school. From the next school year the school will be changing its status from a first and middle school to a primary school. The age of transfer is changing so pupils will transfer to secondary education after Year 6.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school has been modest in judging its effectiveness as satisfactory as it provides a good education and good value for money. The reason for the inspectors' judgements is that standards are improving across the school and the leadership team have established strong and effective teams of staff. Standards are good and the pupils achieve well, except in writing where standards should be higher. Effective improvements to the teaching have reversed a decline in standards in Years 1 and 2. Leadership and management are good and well placed to secure further improvements. Governors provide satisfactory support. The teaching is good and is having a positive impact on pupils' learning but there is more to do to improve writing standards further. The teaching of mathematics is good and information and communication technology (ICT) supports pupils' learning well. The school has made good progress and been successful in tackling the issues raised in the last inspection. Teaching and learning in the reception class are satisfactory but assessments of the children's progress are not accurate enough. Consequently, the teachers are not able to help the children to reach higher standards in writing as quickly as they should. The pupils admitted to the SEN department with moderate learning difficulties do well because they are well taught and supported by a dedicated team of staff. The pupils are fully integrated and add much to the life of the school. The pupils enjoy school and their behaviour is outstanding. The curriculum is good and is enriched by a very good programme of creative and expressive arts and sport.

What the school should do to improve further

* Improve the teaching of writing to raise standards further.* Improve assessment in the reception class to aid rapid progress in writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The pupils achieve well overall and standards are above average. The pupils meet challenging targets and this has resulted in an improvement in standards, although writing standards could be higher. Standards are good in mathematics, science and ICT and satisfactory in English. The pupils achieve high standards in art and design. The children in the reception class achieve satisfactorily and attain the standards expected for their age in most areas of learning. However, too many fall short of this standard in writing. In Years 1 and 2, standards have improved so the pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points. This is evident in the results of the most recent Year 2 national tests. The decline of the previous few years has been reversed but writing standards still lag too far behind those in reading and mathematics. Standards in Years 3 to 7 continue to rise and are above average in mathematics and science. Standards are average in English because the pupils do not perform as well in writing as they do reading. The Year 6 national tests in 2005 show improvements in writing because this has been given high priority and teachers have improved the way they

mark and assess writing. More is needed to ensure that all pupils reach the standards of which they are capable in writing. The pupils achieve well overall in relation to their starting points. The pupils admitted to the SEN department with moderate learning difficulties also achieve well. An analysis of the performance of all pupils, including those with SEN, shows they achieve well over time in relation to their starting points.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's evaluation that the pupils' personal development is good with some outstanding features. The pupils enjoy school, try hard and take pride in their achievements. Their attitudes to school are very positive. Attendance rates are well above average and behaviour is outstanding. There are good opportunities for the pupils to compete in sports. They take part in fund raising activities and charity events that help them contribute to the economic well-being of the local and wider community. Social development is good. Citizenship and social education programmes instil in the pupils a sense of responsibility towards others. The pupils learn to adopt healthy lifestyles as the school encourages older pupils to cycle to school and many participate in exercise during extra-curricular activities. Pupils can explain which food groups are the healthiest. There are strong relationships and good opportunities for pupils to reflect on spiritual and moral issues. After discussing some moral issues in a personal and social education lesson, one pupil commented, 'I like my lessons because I have to think very hard'. The pupils trust that other pupils will treat them fairly so they are free from harm, harassment or bullying. The pupils behave responsibly towards each other and understand right from wrong. The pupils express their views through the well organised school council. Cultural diversity is fostered through music, art and drama as well as religious education. Topics are enhanced by special events and visitors such as the Samba workshop and African drumming. The extensive range of art and design work makes a positive contribution towards the pupils' cultural development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school judges its teaching to be satisfactory. Inspectors believe it is better than this because effective leadership has maintained good teaching and learning since the last inspection. The school has managed staffing changes very well in recent years. This has influenced its initial judgements about teaching when undertaking its self-evaluation. The inspection judgements are that the teaching is good and is sustaining a rise in standards. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. The reception children cooperate well and have quickly settled into school. Assessments help inform the staff how to support the children but are not precise enough to help to identify how best to improve the children's early writing skills. Elsewhere, teachers use assessment information diligently to inform their planning and regularly assess the performance of pupils. The pupils with moderate learning difficulties in the SEN

department do well because they are fully integrated and are given very good support. In Years 1 to 7 the teaching is good because standards are rising well. Teachers set challenging learning targets for the pupils but these are not always evident in writing tasks. Not enough time is given for pupils to check the accuracy of their writing. Mathematics is very well taught so pupils apply their number skills to practical problem solving. For example, when investigating equivalence in fractions. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well. This helps the pupils consolidate their learning using practical and interactive illustrations.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and enriched by a very good range of sport, music and art. Links between subjects are good and are particularly strong when art and design is incorporated into topics. Although evident in some subjects, the opportunities for pupils to write independently and at length are limited. The use of computers and interactive whiteboards motivate and sustain the interest of the pupils. Personal, social and emotional development is promoted through health education programmes. Sex and relationships education are taught to good effect in science and the pupils are made aware of the benefits and dangers of drugs. The pupils benefit greatly from the extensive range of extra-curricular activities, sports and residential and day visits. Team building activities successfully develops in the pupils an awareness of their responsibilities to others and to the wider community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school evaluates this as satisfactory as it sets high expectations in this area. Inspectors believe that this is a good feature of the school because the pupils are looked after well in a safe and caring school community. Parents are very pleased with the school and pupils say they enjoy being with their friends and what the school has to offer. The staff do a great deal to promote the school as one which is an enjoyable and stimulating place to be. The support provided for pupils in the SEN department is very good. The headteacher provides a strong lead in this area resulting in a very inclusive school where everyone is valued. Child protection and health and safety procedures and policies are fully understood by all staff. The governors fulfil their responsibilities in health and safety matters.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Inspectors confirm that leadership and management are good because standards are rising and key priorities such as the teaching of writing are being acted on. This is reflected in the current trend of improvement in writing standards. The headteacher and leadership team have successfully minimised the disruption to pupils' learning while preparing for the changes to the age of transfer from Year 7 to Year 6. The

reorganised management team are focussed on the continuing improvement of all subjects. The school has good capacity to improve further. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. There are good plans in place to strengthen this further. The leadership team provide a clear direction for the school which has been communicated effectively to the pupils, staff and parents. Parents think highly of the school as a result. Self-evaluation is effective and demonstrates that senior staff are very clear about how they are going to achieve further improvements. The school's aims set high expectations for both academic success and enjoyment in learning. The governors provide satisfactory support. They understand their roles but are not as involved as they should be in setting priorities and checking the impact of school improvement activities in the school development plan. Resources and outdoor facilities for sport are of high quality and are very well used. This ensures that all pupils receive a good quality of education in a well resourced and stimulating learning environment.

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Inspection judgements

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| <i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i> | School Overall | 16-19 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

Overall effectiveness

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 | 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 | 3 | 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? | 2 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 | NA |
| The attendance of learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 | 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? | 2 | NA |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 | 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? | 2 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 2 | 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 | 2 | 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 for being so kind and welcoming to the inspectors. We are pleased to see that your parents are proud of you and your school.

We were very pleased with you and your teachers and believe that you are a credit to your school. The inspectors were impressed with your behaviour and especially the way you treat each other with respect. It is encouraging to see you trying hard in lessons. You are doing very well in mathematics lessons and we could see how interesting you find them, especially when teachers make the lessons practical and fun. You use computers well and are making good progress in most areas. The art displays are beautiful and we congratulate you and your teachers on these. Your art work is of a very high standard.

We think you are doing well in most subjects but could do better in writing. We have asked your teachers to make sure you have enough time to check your writing and to help the younger children in the Foundation Stage to make better progress with learning writing skills. We have every confidence in your headteacher and the staff because we feel they are doing well to make your school as good as it is. The inspectors would like to wish you all well in the future.