



Gamlingay First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110609
LEA CAMBRIDGESHIRE LEA
Inspection number 278468
Inspection dates 7 November 2005 to 8 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Geof Timms LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Green End
School category	Community		SG19 3LE
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01767650208
Number on roll	198	Fax number	01767650209
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr. John Jefferies
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable	Headteacher	Mrs. Janice Brown

Age group 4 to 9	Inspection dates 7 November 2005 - 8 November 2005	Inspection number 278468
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Gamlingay First School serves the village and surrounding areas. The proportion of children who are eligible for free school meals is well below average. Almost all children come from white British backgrounds, but a very small number come from ethnic minority backgrounds. No children have English as an additional language. The proportion of children with special educational needs is well below average and has fallen over the last three years. The school has been through a very unsettled time since the last inspection, with changes of senior staff. The current headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post for two years. Children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly typical of children nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Gamlingay First School is an improving school and currently provides a satisfactory education for its children. Following the last inspection, the senior management has been hampered by significant changes of staff and the school has worked hard to ensure that this has not had a significantly negative impact on standards. Staff have a good awareness of its strengths and weaknesses and their judgements are largely supported by the findings of the inspection. The school provides satisfactory value for money. The improvements evident since the current headteacher was appointed indicate that there is a good capacity to improve further. Current standards are broadly satisfactory and this picture reflects the largely satisfactory progress made by children throughout the school. However, standards in writing are below those expected nationally. The school has recognised this and has plans to raise standards further. In mathematics, too few of the more able children reach high enough standards. A number of the higher attaining children make insufficient progress in a number of subjects, due to a lack of work provided that is challenging enough or due to inconsistency in teachers' expectations. Some of this lack of consistency is due to the recent changes to the staffing structure and to the leadership of subjects being at an early stage of development. Children's personal development is good. They behave well and the school makes good provision for their social and moral development. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage (Reception) is satisfactory and improving. Standards and progress are broadly typical for children of their age although the more able children are not yet fully served by the planning and teaching. The outdoor area is inadequate and the school has plans and finance in place to improve this.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics. - Ensure that the teaching provides sufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils. - Continue the improvements for reception children by developing the quality and use of the outside area. - Continue to develop the role of subject leaders in monitoring teaching and learning and in spreading good practice.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children's achievement is satisfactory. Their attainment on entry when they join the school in reception is broadly typical, but weaker than usual in early writing skills. By the end of Year 2, the national statutory assessments show that most children have made satisfactory progress and achieve broadly average standards. This picture is generally consistent over time. In 2005, results fell slightly from those in 2004 but remain at a broadly average level, although the writing standards required improvement. Too few children reached higher standards in mathematics. The school is aware of the weaknesses through its analysis of children's answers to test questions, and has plans to raise standards further. Boys tend to do better at mathematics and girls at reading

and writing. This matches the national picture and there is no evidence of the provision being any different for either group. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4 most children have continued to make satisfactory progress and are achieving standards in line with those expected. However, the achievement of the more able children requires improvement so that more of them reach the higher standards of which they are capable. This view is supported by some parents' opinions. This process needs to start from the Foundation Stage and to continue throughout the school. Children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They are often well helped by support staff. The few children from mixed heritage or minority ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development and well-being are good overall. All children are valued and taught to recognise their worth as individuals. Behaviour is good and pupils' attitudes are very positive; they enjoy coming to school, want to succeed and take pride in their school. Some younger children, especially boys, are easily distracted, but by the time they reach Year 4, they are more mature and hard working and prepared to take more responsibility for their own learning. Children are confident and talk with ease about their thoughts and feelings about school. This is because teachers make sure that they give children good opportunities to have ideas and views, and encourage them to share them with others. Although there is no school council, children have a voice in the running of the school through class-based assemblies where suggestions for change or development are shared. Attendance is satisfactory. The school takes a firm line against family holidays taken in term time. The spiritual, moral, social, cultural and physical development of children is satisfactory overall. Moral and social issues are taught well. Spiritual and cultural development have some strengths, but there is insufficient emphasis placed on teaching children about cultural diversity. Children learn to be safe, economically aware, healthy and to respond to the community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There have been significant changes to staffing and to the year groups to which teachers have been deployed. Teachers have made important changes to their teaching over the last two years. These have resulted in better planning and in the developing use of assessment information to provide suitable work and to group children based on their prior attainment. However, there are times when there is insufficient challenge for the higher attaining children. The pace of some lessons is too slow and does not encourage the full participation of all children. Discipline is largely effective but where it is less so, the learning is hampered. The teaching assistants offer good support, especially for the children with special educational needs. The strongest teaching is often the result of

good relationships with children which encourage them to take a full part in lessons. In very effective lessons imaginative methods are used to teach complex matters. Lesson planning is satisfactory and lessons have a suitable structure. Displays of children's work are bright and often have an interactive element. This helps create an effective learning environment. Children are sometimes encouraged to talk and share ideas, working together in pairs, and this could usefully be developed further throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has recently carried out an extensive review of its curriculum so that it meets statutory requirements. The work children have is satisfactory in its range and richness. Teachers are also giving increasing thought to how children learn best. Literacy and numeracy skills are being enhanced through developing links with work in other subjects such as history, geography and religious education. Children with special educational needs are provided for well. The school includes children fully in all aspects of school life and plans effectively to meet their individual needs. There is normally a good range of clubs and activities that are well supported by the children, although this provision is hampered at present by work to the school hall. Additional visits and visitors to the school bring learning alive and make it more enjoyable for children, and these are supported by parents. Personal, social, health and citizenship education helps to ensure children understand the importance of staying safe and being healthy, and prepares them well to make a contribution to the community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care of children is satisfactory. The school has clear systems to inform children about how well they are doing and how they can improve. However, the use of assessment information to provide appropriate work, especially for the more able children, is underdeveloped. The school has good procedures for ensuring the safety and well being of all children. Child protection and health and safety procedures are clear and up to date. Accidents and illnesses are properly catered for and all school staff are made aware of vulnerable children. As a result, children feel safe and parents know that their children are in a secure environment. Most parents and carers are extremely happy with the care and guidance their children receive. They have regular opportunities to meet with teachers to discuss their children's progress as well as receiving regular reports informing them how well their children are performing. The level of care children show towards each other in lessons and on the playground is good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management are satisfactory, overall. However, aspects of the leadership are good. For example, the school is good at evaluating its strengths and weaknesses, and the majority of its judgements are supported by clear evidence and backed up by the findings of the inspection. Parents are involved in this process although not all feel they get an appropriate response to concerns. The involvement of children in aspects of the work of the school is developing well through class assemblies, and those spoken to during the inspection were articulate and very aware of issues important to them. The staff are aware of many of these and have appropriate plans in place to improve provision where necessary. For example, the leadership team have recently begun to take part in a training and development programme that is intended to support innovation and change where needed. The headteacher has shown strong leadership by introducing much needed improvements to the staffing structure and the curriculum. Together with the deputy headteacher, she is a good role model for staff both as a teacher and as a leader. However, she is also well aware of the need for all staff to take responsibility for the areas in which they lead. The school improvement plan provides a suitable set of priorities for the development of the school, although the evaluation of improvements needs to be sharper and more measurable. Subject leaders do not yet monitor the teaching and learning sufficiently and this prevents the spreading of good practice and the addressing of areas of concern. The staff work hard to ensure there is no discrimination in their provision and that pupils have equality of opportunity, although the more able are insufficiently challenged. Resources are satisfactorily deployed. The governing body offer the school a good level of support and also ask questions about its work. A number of governors are regular visitors to the school and the plans for observing and monitoring its work ensure that they have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The improvements already made by the current senior leadership team demonstrate that the school has a good capacity to improve further in the future.

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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?	3	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?	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?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	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	2	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	2	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	2	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 welcoming us to your school when we visited. It was a pleasure to talk to you and to watch you working and playing. We particularly enjoyed meeting some of the older children who told us a lot about the things you like doing at school, and how they would like to see the toilets improved. This letter is to tell you about some of the important things we saw. The headteacher, teachers and other adults all look after and care for you well. They encourage you to be healthy and to stay safe, and are working very hard to ensure you learn new things and to make the school even better in the future. You behave well most of the time and this helps the teachers teach you. Your teachers are keen to make the school even better for you. We think that to do this they need to help you get better at writing and mathematics. Those of you who find the work quite easy need to have more difficult work that stretches your brains further! The reception classes need to have their outdoor area improved. Teachers who are responsible for a subject need to spend more time helping the other teachers become even more successful at teaching it. It was good to find out that so many of you are happy at school, and that 99% of your parents said you were happy there as well. Keep working hard and enjoy your time at Gamlingay!