



Ghyllgrove Junior School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114914
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279475
Inspection dates 3 July 2006 to 4 July 2006
Reporting inspector Mrs. Sandra Tweddell AI

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

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|------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | The Gore |
| School category | Community | | SS14 2BG |
| Age range of pupils | 7 to 11 | | |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01268 450067 |
| Number on roll | 200 | Fax number | 01268 523175 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | Mr.C Moloney |
| Date of previous inspection | 25 September 2000 | Headteacher | Mrs. J Gibbon |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Ghyllgrove Junior School, part of the Basildon East Excellence Cluster, is of average size. Its pupils come from the local area. Most are from White British backgrounds and a few are from minority ethnic cultures. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals, with learning difficulties or disabilities and with statements of special educational needs are well above those of most schools. Attainment on entry is below average and pupils' literacy skills are particularly weak. The school runs a 12-place resource base for hearing impaired pupils aged from 3 to 11. Awards achieved by the school include Investors in People and Advanced Healthy Schools awards along with the Basic Skills and Sports Active marks. In the last two years, it has had a 50% turnover of teachers, and a new headteacher and deputy.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Ghyllgrove Juniors provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Value for money is also satisfactory. The school is rapidly improving under the firm leadership of the headteacher and the support from knowledgeable and enthusiastic subject leaders. The inspection team agrees with the school's self-evaluation in nearly all respects. Staffing changes caused standards overall to fall in 2005 to a low level and for the past three years, standards in English have been low. This year, standards in English have improved significantly and are now below average; the school is likely to exceed its targets. The school's emphasis on improving standards in English has certainly paid off. Standards are rising in mathematics and science but are still low. Achievement across the school is now satisfactory. Personal development is good and attendance has improved, although it is still below average. The school knows it needs to do more to teach pupils about the richness and diversity of cultures. The curriculum is good and is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular provision. Provision in the resource base is good and pupils achieve well. This is because pupils' needs are understood well. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with many strengths. Pupils receive good care and guidance for their personal development but academic guidance is satisfactory. As a result of the school's new assessment systems, pupils who fall behind in their learning are now better identified. This is helping to raise standards in some classes, but not all. The majority of parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall as the impact of the leaders' thoughtful work is just beginning to be felt on pupils' progress. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive and know they need to work more strategically. The capacity to improve is very good because of the enthusiasm and good team effort of all who work in the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and science.
- Continue to work with parents to improve attendance.
- Implement the system for academic guidance consistently.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about cultural diversity.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards have risen gradually over the past five years, although for the past three years they have been low in English. In 2005 the poor progress of boys affected standards at the end of Year 6 and as there were almost twice as many boys as girls, standards dropped to those of the lowest 5% of schools in the country. More able pupils also achieved poorly but other groups of pupils achieved satisfactorily. The new leadership team has been working hard to motivate boys and to challenge the more able and although there is more to do, standards in English have improved this year. All groups of pupils are now achieving satisfactorily but standards remain below average because of the low starting points of the pupils and the large number with learning

difficulties and disabilities. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve well in learning English. This year, the school is likely to exceed its targets for English, but is unlikely to meet those for mathematics. Standards in mathematics and science are still low and have been identified as an area for improvement next year. Pupils are hearing impaired do well because of the high level of support and good teaching.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. A strong behaviour policy reinforces good behaviour. Occasional misbehaviour is dealt with effectively, and the number of exclusions has been reduced. Pupils enjoy lessons and other activities and maintain their concentration well. Although attendance is still below the national average, it is improving because of the positive steps the school has taken to encourage it, for example by focusing on attendance in assemblies. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The school seeks and values pupils' views, for instance through the school council. Pupils have good opportunities to appreciate their own culture, but the school recognises the need to give them a greater appreciation of the diversity of cultures represented in British society, through the use of visits and visitors to the school. Pupils have a good understanding of safe practices and also of the features of a healthy lifestyle, for which the school has an advanced award. They make a good contribution both to the school, taking responsibility for different tasks, and the wider community, for example by raising money for charity or visiting a local hospice. They make satisfactory progress in developing the basic skills needed for their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with good features. Some teaching is inspirational and motivating. The teaching of pupils with hearing impairment is good; this is because of the expertise of staff and the effective ways pupils are helped to communicate. Behaviour is managed well so that the orderly environment helps pupils to learn. All teachers have objectives for lessons and set out how pupils will meet these objectives. Lesson planning is thorough and includes different activities for the most and least able, so they work at the right level. There has been an emphasis on using assessment to identify groups of pupils who are falling behind and this has successfully raised standards in English, although there is more to do in mathematics and science. There are some inconsistencies in teaching and learning. The system for setting targets for pupils is inconsistently used and sometimes the objectives for the lesson are insufficiently focused. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work which supports their learning skills, but the effectiveness of this varies from excellent to satisfactory. Sometimes, the teacher does all the work so pupils do not learn well. In a few cases

pupils' poor skills of retention and listening affect their ability to learn. Generally however, teachers enthuse pupils through their stimulating teaching.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has a curriculum that meets the needs of all groups of pupils well. Teachers plan together, to ensure that all pupils in a year group have equal access to the curriculum. The school has also planned effectively for pupils who need an additional boost to achieve as expected. It meets all the national requirements and is making good, creative links between different subject areas. It also benefits from initiatives such as the Creative Partnership, where artists and writers work directly with pupils, to extend their learning. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular clubs, which include opportunities to make music, and support from secondary schools in areas such as sport, performing arts and modern foreign languages. Pupils learn about sex and relationships, the misuse of drugs, and the importance of keeping safe, with the help of outside agencies such as the school nurse and the police.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This area of the school's work is satisfactory. Its strengths lie in its support for pupils' personal development. There has been less of an emphasis on academic guidance, although this is now beginning to improve. The school has good procedures to ensure that pupils are safe. Appropriate checks are carried out on all adults working with children, risk assessments are made and all staff have had training in child protection. There is good support for pupils with behaviour and other difficulties. Access for disabled pupils is not easy, and the school has plans to tackle this. Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education, even if they are sometimes reluctant to leave because they feel well cared for. The care and support for pupils with hearing impairment is good. The school has the wide support of parents, the great majority of whom feel that the school listens to their views and are comfortable in approaching it. It has set up good systems for providing pupils with guidance on how to improve their work. However, these are not as yet applied consistently across the school or are not sufficiently focused to assist pupils to make good progress. Academic guidance is, therefore, satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The capacity to improve is very good as the headteacher uses data wisely and leads the school well. She has produced a staff team who are enthusiastic, work closely as a team and are open to ideas to raise standards. Although she has a shrewd understanding of what needs to happen for standards to rise, she has been hampered somewhat by the difficulty of appointing a leadership team during a period of high staff turnover. The team is now established

and all subject leaders have produced good action plans indicating how provision is to be improved over the next year. There have been significant improvements in English, attendance and a reduction in exclusions in the past year. This is because of rigorous management action, including the monitoring of teaching and learning. Almost all staff have taken part in professional development on self evaluation which has helped improve their monitoring of subjects. The school improvement planning includes almost all who are involved with the school, but more could be done to engage parents in this process. Governance is satisfactory. Governors work hard, are supportive of the school and know they need to develop a more strategic role as they are too reliant on the headteacher. They have made a good start developing a plan for their improving their work based on an analysis of their strengths and weaknesses.

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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 |
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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? | 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 | NA | 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 | 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 | 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 | 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 | 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 | 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 |

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|---|-----|
| 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

I am writing to let you know the results of our inspection on 3 and 4 July. Thank you for looking after us and for answering our questions. A special thanks to pupils on the school council who gave up part of their lunch time to talk to us. Your school gives you a satisfactory education and your personal development is good. After some changes over the past two years, the school is improving quickly because Mrs Gibbon is a good leader and is supported well by hard working and knowledgeable teachers. You are all making the progress that is expected of you and have improved your work in English. Your parents are pleased with your school. You told us you enjoy school and you know who to talk to if you have problems. You behave well and most of you have a positive attitude towards your work. We have made some suggestions to improve your school. These are;- 1. Raise the standards of your work in mathematics and science. 2. Improve attendance. Some of you miss a lot of school which affects your work, so we have asked the school to work with your parents to make sure you all attend regularly. 3. Sometimes, you do not use PLOT to set targets that will improve your work, so we have asked your teachers to work on this. 4. Many of you do not understand the way in which people from different countries live their lives or worship their gods. This is important as you live in a country made up of many cultures and beliefs. Thank you once again for making us welcome. Have a good summer holiday and best wishes for the future. Yours sincerely