



Gloucester Road Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115585
LEA Gloucestershire
Inspection number 279632
Inspection dates 8 November 2005 to 8 November 2005
Reporting inspector Lorna Brackstone RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Gloucester Road
School category	Community		Cheltenham
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Gloucestershire GL51 8PB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01242 512792
Number on roll	148	Fax number	01242 572399
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Peter Shortell
Date of previous inspection	22 November 1999	Headteacher	Mr Andrew Brooks

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 8 November 2005 - 8 November 2005	Inspection number 279632
-----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated to the north west of central Cheltenham. Most families live in social housing, although there is a significant minority of private homeowners whose children attend the school. Most pupils are of White British heritage but a few are from Asian and European backgrounds and speak English in addition to their heritage language. Pupil mobility is high. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than average.

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 special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

The school does not provide an adequate education for its pupils and gives unsatisfactory value for money. The school has a few strengths but far too many weaknesses for it to be effective.

The quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage is inadequate. The curriculum planned by the senior leadership team does not match the needs of these children and the accommodation does not enable their full entitlement to be provided. For example, there is no safe and secure outdoor area for the teaching staff to use as an integral part of the school day. Teaching and learning are satisfactory because the team of staff working in this key stage are responsive to the needs of these young children. However, there is a lack of funding and an insufficiently suitable range of resources for the children in this stage.

Pupils in Years 1 to 6 do not make sufficient progress and overall standards are too low. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is inadequate because expectations are not high enough and the work set for pupils is not well matched to their capabilities. Additionally, pupils are not provided with enough guidance on how they can improve their work. These important weaknesses limit their academic achievement.

Pupils' personal development, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects, is satisfactory. Behaviour in and around school is good. Pupils have a good understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle. However, the pupils' basic skills are not being sufficiently developed to prepare them well for later stages of education and future employment.

The curriculum is inadequate and pupils are not sufficiently supported and guided in their learning. The school has close links with the pre-school provision and the after school club, which shares their accommodation. It is also closely linked with a central cluster of Cheltenham schools and partners with a specialist sports college. Such partnerships add enrichment to the extra-curricular sports clubs.

School leadership and management are inadequate. Monitoring and evaluation systems lack rigour and this has led to some of the key areas of weakness, identified for improvement in the previous inspection report, not being rectified. The school's self-evaluation processes lack accuracy and, despite the commitment of many members of staff, the school does not have sufficient capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- rectify the weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school, especially with regard to the rigour and robustness of the self-evaluation and monitoring

processes •raise standards and improve achievement by making sure that learners of all ages are given work to do that meets their needs and capabilities •improve the quality of marking in Years 1 and 2 •improve the quality and provision of accommodation and resources within the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Children start school at the levels below those expected for their age group. Speaking skills and physical development are particularly weak. Despite the best efforts of the Foundation Stage teaching staff, progress in the reception year is unsatisfactory. This is because the children do not have access to an appropriate curriculum or accommodation that is fit for purpose.

The results of the Year 6 national tests in 2005 show that overall standards are too low. There has been a significant improvement in standards in science since the previous inspection, largely because pupils are provided with a detailed revision programme and prepared well for the tests. However, standards in English have been consistently low since the previous inspection. Standards in mathematics have been in decline since 2003. The leadership and management of the school have not rectified this situation.

Achievement overall is inadequate. Pupils do not make enough progress in the infant years because teaching is unsatisfactory. Progress in the junior years is satisfactory overall. However, teachers' expectations are not always high enough and the targets set are not sufficiently challenging, particularly for the higher attainers. These features restrict pupils' achievement. In contrast, pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress because they are supported well during activities in class and have suitable programmes in place to support their learning. Higher achieving pupils, including those who are gifted and talented, benefit from additional work with a local grammar school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory. Pupils attend regularly and enjoy coming to school to meet their friends. They behave well in class and only become restless when teaching fails to capture their sustained involvement in lessons. Behaviour in the playground is good because adults encourage positive attitudes and remind the children to be kind and considerate.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Social and moral developments are promoted well, for example, through the involvement of pupils in the school council. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to lead healthy lifestyles. This is supported by regular exercise in school, encouragement to drink water and to have a balanced diet. Pupils are alert to stranger danger and know that only legitimate visitors are allowed in school. Pupils take an active part in fund raising for charity and school events, such as concerts and fetes. They sing to senior citizens and benefit from close links with the 'Cheltenham Open Spaces' department. All these

activities help them to prepare for future life in the community. However, the pupils' basic skills are not being sufficiently developed to prepare them adequately for later stages of education and employment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching and learning are inadequate overall. The systems in place to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning lack rigour. There is limited sharing of the features of teaching that enable better learning and this is a missed opportunity to make improvement.

Teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage. Teachers and support staff understand the needs of these young children well and work hard to plan a range of interesting activities within inappropriate accommodation. Teaching is inadequate in the infant stage because the work planned does not meet the needs of all the pupils and there is a lack of urgency to the lessons. The quality of marking is particularly weak and does not help pupils move forward in their learning.

Teaching is satisfactory overall in junior years. Teachers clearly explain the learning intentions of the lessons to pupils and this helps the pupils to know what is expected of them. In good lessons, questioning is used well to motivate the pupils and deepen their thinking skills. Effective use is made of the interactive whiteboard to engage learners' involvement and teaching assistants support learning well. However, on occasions, pupils are required to sit inactively for too long and this results in loss of interest and inhibits progress. Some teachers in junior years are working hard to improve the marking system but because monitoring procedures are weak, the suggested improvement is not being shared amongst colleagues in teaching other year groups.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

Although a review of the curriculum has recently taken place, the new programme is inadequately matched to the needs and interests of the pupils. The school is not ensuring that learners' needs are well met through the provision of an enjoyable, creative and relevant curriculum. Additionally, there have been insufficient checks to ensure that all pupils are enabled to build knowledge and skills sequentially.

The extra-curricular provision is good. Sport clubs are popular and this, combined with the school's emphasis on eating correctly, helps pupils to maintain a healthy lifestyle. The pupils benefit from a partnership with the local sports college which provides specialist coaching.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

The school is friendly and welcoming and provides a caring environment for its pupils. Most pupils enjoy good relationships with the adults, although not all of them are confident in approaching someone if they have a problem. Child protection procedures are securely in place. However, arrangements for the youngest children's exit from the school at the end of the day are not safe. This is because they are required to use the same door as the older pupils who unintentionally push them aside. Consequently, it is not possible for the teaching staff to safely reunite the reception children with their parents.

There is a need for the senior leadership team and governors to review a number of important policies relating to health, safety, racism and sex education within school.

The support and guidance given to pupils in their learning is inadequate. Although the pupils have general targets about things they need to get better at, these are not specific enough to enable them to make sufficient progress in their learning. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Some teachers rarely identify what pupils need to do to improve. Others are inappropriately critical and offer only limited guidance. Consequently, the pupils themselves are not clear about how they can build upon what they already understand and can do so that they might achieve at a higher level. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to engage in self and peer assessment activities. This means that they are not being given sufficient responsibility for their own learning and progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management of the school are inadequate. The school does not set clear enough educational direction and this dissipates the team effort. The drive to improve standards and promote high quality provision has not been determined enough. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance lacks rigour. There are no systematic or robust procedures in place to review initiatives or to check that all learners receive a fair deal. There has been insufficient progress made in moving the school forward since the previous inspection and there is limited capacity for further improvement.

The very newly formed senior leadership team are enthusiastic about their areas of responsibility and are eager to improve standards. However, they are thwarted in their attempts to make a difference to the learners. This is because key teaching staff are not provided with regular opportunities to work with their colleagues to evaluate provision within specific subject areas. Consequently, morale is low amongst some key staff.

Governors have not rigorously challenged the school's leadership or taken their share of responsibility for the declining standards and the insufficient improvement from the last inspection. Although parents and staff have been consulted recently, there

are no systematic links to show that they are regularly involved in the self-evaluation process. A significant minority of parents are worried about the leadership and management of the school.

Financial resources are not deployed to best effect. For example, a very recent refurbishment programme has just included all Key Stage 1 and 2 classrooms. However, it has not included the Foundation Stage accommodation area, which is in a very poor state of repair and does not have a safe and secure area for outdoor learning.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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
--	-----------------------	--------------

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	4	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	No	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	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?	3	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	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	4	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4	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?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	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	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	No	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	No
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	No
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

Gloucester Road Primary School Gloucester Road Cheltenham Gloucestershire GL51 8PB

8 November 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for giving us such a warm and friendly welcome. We were interested in watching how you learn and enjoyed talking to you about your work.

What we liked most about your school:

- We think that you behave well in and around school.
- You are given good opportunities to play sports such as football and rugby and understand the importance of keeping healthy.
- We think that those of you who have learning difficulties are making satisfactory progress and are supported well by the teaching assistants.
- The school council are doing a good job and are keen to listen and take on board the views of all the children in trying to make the school better.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Improve the way the school is led and managed.
- Make sure that you know what to do to get better at your work.
- Ensure that all the work you are set is interesting and helps you learn successfully.
- Make sure that the youngest children have an acceptable standard of accommodation and adequate learning resources.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lorna Brackstone

Lead Inspector