

Gilbert Colvin Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102805
Local Authority	Redbridge
Inspection number	286500
Inspection dates	14–15 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Sudworth

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	471
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr K Young
Headteacher	Mrs J Holder
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2001
School address	Strafford Avenue Clayhall Ilford IG5 0TL
Telephone number	020 8550 4630
Fax number	020 8550 2106

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils at this two-form entry school come from a wide range of social backgrounds. The percentage entitled to free school meals is below the national average. There have been significant demographic changes since the last inspection and now almost half the pupils are from minority ethnic groups. A large percentage of these speak a language other than English as their first language. A small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English, and almost all of these are in the Foundation Stage. A smaller percentage of pupils than in most schools have learning difficulties and disabilities. The headteacher has only been in post for seven weeks.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a successful school and provides a good education for its pupils. Its provision of care, guidance and support is outstanding and pupils feel extremely well cared for. Effective links with other schools contribute to the good arrangements at the age of transfer. The vast majority of parents are very happy with the progress that their children make and the overall provision. One parent writes, ' My son has achieved his full potential thanks to careful nurturing. His class teachers have always picked up on his strengths and weaknesses and adjusted his work accordingly.'

Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage. This good achievement continues throughout the school so that standards by the end of both Years 2 and 6 are above average with a particular strength in English and science. Pupils' spoken language develops very successfully as they progress through the school. English is used particularly well across the curriculum. In history, for example, Year 6 pupils showed very good empathy when they wrote as evacuees as part of their second world war studies. One pupil wrote, 'I could see other children. Their eyes were watery and seemed to be darting between the train and their parents.' Pupils are avid readers and make mature choices of books by Year 6. These factors contribute significantly to their particularly good progress in English. While results are above average in mathematics, results have been falling and they are not as high as in English and science. This is because not enough attention is given to the application of their number skills in real life situations and to investigation in mathematics.

There is a high level of mutual respect amongst the children and good relationships between staff and pupils. These support the pleasant atmosphere for learning. Pupils' personal development is good. They enjoy school and this is reflected in their above average attendance and attentiveness in lessons. Their concern for others is displayed in their neighbourliness towards one another and their good levels of cooperation. Teaching and learning are mostly good with some in Key Stage 2 that is outstanding. Learning tasks are frequently stimulating and reflect pupils' learning needs and capture their interests. The curriculum is good and is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. It is also good in the Foundation Stage despite Reception classes having to contend with limiting accommodation. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified quickly and well provided for. As a result, they make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress because of the good attention given to their needs.

The school has progressed well since the last inspection especially in information and communication technology (ICT). Leadership and management are good overall. The new headteacher has settled into the school very well and already has a good perception of its strengths and its areas for development. Core subject leaders are effective. However, some subject leaders and some in other leadership positions are not as effective as they might be because their roles are not fully understood. The school has a satisfactory capacity for further development. The new headteacher has good awareness and vision, and understands fully the areas to be developed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Clarify staff leadership roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematics skills to problem solving and investigation to raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Attainment on entry is similar to that in most schools. All groups of pupils in the school achieve well and pupils reach above average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. Foundation Stage children often reach a standard above expectations for their age by the end of the Reception year. While progress is good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, it accelerates in Years 3 to 6 where teaching is at its best overall. Pupils make very good progress in Year 6 and especially in English. This is because of outstanding teaching. However, pupils' attainment has dipped in mathematics in the school because not enough attention has been given to the use of mathematics and investigation. Results in the subject have been notably lower than those in English and science. Despite this, the attainment of pupils in the current Year 6 is above expectations in all subjects and continues the good trend from previous years.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. They readily take up opportunities to reflect about and empathise with the feelings of others. Pupils' good understanding of healthy lifestyles is seen in their good take up of extra-curricular sport and their understanding of healthy foods. They feel safe because pupils care for one another and behave well. Pupils from a wide variety of backgrounds get on well together. As they say, 'This school provides a great education, not just basics but social skills.' Behaviour is good.

Pupils show a growing understanding of their rights and responsibilities. They express their views articulately. The school council thrives on the many opportunities to represent the views of others. It was involved, for example, in the interviews for the new headteacher. Its proposal for a playground buddy scheme includes a most eloquent letter to the headteacher that shows a highly sophisticated understanding of the issues and a strong grasp of managing a budget. Pupils develop effectively the skills and personal qualities that will enable them to move easily into the next phase of education. They are well equipped to achieve satisfying and fulfilling lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons have a strong sense of purpose. Pupils enjoy their learning and typically work hard to achieve good results. Well structured and stimulating tasks capture pupils' interest and generally reflect their differing learning needs. The purpose of lessons is usually explained well to pupils at the beginning. However, teachers do not use success criteria for learning consistently well. Consequently opportunities are missed to assess how well pupils have understood the lesson. Much of the marking is excellent, although some does not reach this high standard and is less helpful to pupils in improving their work.

Teachers encourage precision in pupils' speaking skills and good listening. This helps them to contribute their ideas confidently in class. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, encouraging them to do their best and often make learning fun. The teaching of English is a particular strength. Teaching assistants work extremely effectively in partnership with class teachers ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities progress well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and fully meets national requirements, although links between subjects could be developed further to reinforce pupils' learning and inject even further enjoyment. It is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities and the teaching of French. Special focus weeks such as 'Black History' cater well for pupils' different interests and backgrounds. Very good provision for those with learning difficulties and disabilities and English as an additional language assist their good progress. Selectively chosen visits, for example to museums, support pupils' understanding of their studies well. Good use of visitors, like that of a wartime evacuee, enhances pupils' understanding of aspects of their work. Police visits assist pupils' knowledge of safe living; they are part of a developing structure for personal, social and health education which contributes effectively to healthy living. The increasing provision for gifted and talented pupils currently caters well for those talented in music and art. The needs of able pupils are usually met well in core subjects. However, there is an insufficient use of investigative work in mathematics.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Very careful attention to every aspect of pupils' well-being is at the heart of this school so that pupils feel very safe and secure. Staff work extremely hard and successfully to create a very supportive environment in which pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem. High expectations, good assessment procedures and targeted links with parents all contribute to pupils' good progress. Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils are clear and robust. Pupils with language or learning difficulties receive excellent support throughout their years in the school. Year 5 playground 'buddies' exemplify good practice when these pupils are paired with children in the Reception classes in order to demonstrate how to make best use of their playtimes. The regular reviews of pupils' progress ensure that pupils who may be falling behind are identified quickly. Children who require individual education plans also benefit from targets which clearly indicate what each pupil has to do in order to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Under the strong, committed leadership of the new headteacher, the school is well led and managed. The headteacher has acquired in a very short time an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and where it needs to improve. She has a clear agenda for improvement with which to work with other leaders and managers. The headteacher has accurately identified the need to clarify the roles and responsibilities of staff and increase levels of accountability. The core subject leaders have a secure knowledge of standards in their subjects and are clear about what pupils need to do to improve even further. The school has a good track record in monitoring and evaluating performance in core subjects, including a programme of classroom observation and analysis of pupils' work. The analysis of school performance data is thorough. However, the school rightly recognises that this should now lead to more clearly defined action for further improvement; in particular, better quality monitoring needs to be extended to other subject areas and leadership roles.

The school's leadership and management effectively promote equality of opportunity and pupils have a high level of trust in the school's ability to ensure their safety and well-being. The school has managed the rapidly changing needs of pupils well. There are good links with parents. The school is well staffed and manages its resources effectively, leading to good educational outcomes. Governors meet fully their statutory duties and are becoming more involved in the school's work.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

28 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Gilbert Colvin Primary School, Ilford, IG5 0TL

We enjoyed our visit to your school. We think that your school is a good one and you are making good progress. The results that you obtain at the end of Years 2 and 6 are impressive and above the national average. You make particularly good progress in English and science. You are also doing well in mathematics. However, we think that you could be given more opportunities to investigate in mathematics and to use your mathematics skills in more exciting ways and so reach even higher standards. We have asked your teachers to provide more opportunities for this in your work.

We were very impressed with the care, support and guidance that you receive in school. We think that this is outstanding. You behave very well and clearly enjoy your work. You get along very well together. You have very good attitudes to your work and this assists your good progress. You are developing well as young people. We think that teaching and learning are good and some of the teaching we saw was outstanding. You have a good range of learning activities and you clearly enjoy the extra-curricular opportunities. The school provides well for those of you who find learning more difficult and whose first language is not English and you too make good progress.

We think that the school is well led and managed and that your new headteacher has settled in quickly. She has a clear idea where further improvements can be made in the school. We feel, and your headteacher agrees, that staff who have particular leadership responsibilities need to know more clearly what their roles involve so that they can help other staff in their work.

Thank you once again for sharing your work with us and talking to us about your school, of which you are justly proud. We wish you all well for the future and hope that you continue to achieve well both now and in the future.

With every good wish to you all,

Peter Sudworth Lead inspector