

Gee Cross Holy Trinity CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106226
Local Authority	Tameside
Inspection number	287448
Inspection date	3 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Joe Peacock

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	202
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alex Dunlop
Headteacher	Mrs M Gormley
Date of previous school inspection	2 December 2002
School address	Higham Lane Gee Cross Hyde Cheshire SK14 5LX
Telephone number	0161 3682911
Fax number	0161 3682911

Age group	5–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is situated on the outskirts of Tameside, Greater Manchester and is smaller than average. There has been an increase in numbers since the previous inspection as the school's popularity grows. It is oversubscribed each year. Almost all pupils are from a White British background. The proportion entitled to free school meals and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are both below average.

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 good school with some outstanding features. It gives good value for money. The school's own evaluation of its effectiveness is mostly accurate if a little modest for some aspects. Parents are very appreciative of all the school is doing for their children and are justifiably proud of the school's excellent reputation. Pupils love coming to school. Attendance is consistently well above average.

Standards on entry to the Reception class are generally in line with those typical for children in this age group. Pupils make good progress from the moment they start because of the good range of challenging learning experiences that are provided for them, despite the difficulties caused by the lack of a suitable outdoor learning area.

Pupils' good progress continues in the infant classes and by Year 2, standards are consistently above average. By Year 6, a sparkling curriculum and good to outstanding teaching successfully engages pupils and motivates them to do their best in lessons. As a result, standards are very high in science and above average in English and mathematics. School initiatives to improve standards in writing have paid off as the preliminary national test results for 11 year olds in 2007 indicate a significant improvement in English.

The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school with teachers and teaching assistants working effectively as a team. The highly qualified and very experienced headteacher leads an effective team. All staff contribute well to school improvement planning, although there are too many priorities and the criteria to judge how effectively each one is addressed is not specific enough. Excellent relationships exist between pupils and their teachers and pupils are highly motivated to learn. All behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. The curriculum is outstanding and a true reflection of the commitment and dedication of the staff to provide the best possible learning opportunities for pupils of all abilities. Their efforts for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities result in these pupils often making outstanding progress. The high quality of the curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' outstanding personal development and their enjoyment of school. Pupils enjoy learning to speak Spanish and there is good support for the many after-school activities.

Parents appreciate the high level of care, support and guidance for their children and the close partnership that they have with staff. 'School makes you feel involved in children's learning', was a typical comment. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is an inspirational leader and has developed an effective management structure, a new deputy headteacher being the latest addition. Key post holders such as the Foundation Stage coordinator and special needs coordinator are knowledgeable and extremely conscientious. All staff share responsibility for managing the different subject areas. They carefully monitor pupils' progress and use the information well to set new targets for literacy, numeracy and on occasions, personal and social skills. All staff are involved in monitoring the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning, and this helps good ideas to spread. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive and the chair of governors, who has a very good knowledge of the school, is leading them well. Governors visit the school often but are not yet sufficiently involved in monitoring the effectiveness of all aspects of the school with a view to bringing about further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Reduce the number of key priorities for improvement to make the workload more manageable and ensure that the criteria to measure how successfully each priority has been addressed are more detailed.
- Involve governors more in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school to give them first-hand knowledge of its strengths and areas for development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with skills that are generally in line with those expected for their age. Most make good progress especially in their language skills and in their personal, social and emotional development because of the good quality of teaching. By the end of their Reception year, most achieve all the learning goals expected of them.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils' good progress continues and standards are consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. They do particularly well in reading because of the importance the school places on hearing individual pupils read. Standards in Year 6 are very high in science and consistently above average in English and mathematics. In the latest national tests for 11 year olds, the provisional results indicate a marked improvement in English with almost all pupils reaching the expected standard and over half achieving above average standards. This reflects the success of school initiatives to improve standards, particularly in writing. Observations of pupils' work shows that they attain high standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and in design technology. Many pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make excellent progress because of the skilled support that they receive.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Very high standards of behaviour are expected and achieved resulting in a safe, happy school where bullying is not tolerated. In Reception, pupils do especially well in their personal, social and emotional development. They work happily on the challenging activities they are given to do and benefit from the close attention of staff, when they need it. Parents appreciate the strong Christian and social values that the school promotes and virtually all who responded to the inspection questionnaire were very supportive of the school and what it is doing for their children. Attendance is well above average, as it has been since the previous inspection and this is a good indication of how much pupils enjoy coming to school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The deeply committed and caring staff lead by example and successfully motivate pupils to do their best in everything. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted most effectively through close links with the church and in well-planned assemblies. The sense of atmosphere and occasion are clear at these times. Cultural development has a high profile and pupils have a good knowledge of the different Christian denominations as well as other world religions.

Pupils understand the importance of healthy eating and exercise. Community links are particularly strong and pupils are often involved in activities such as raising money for survival boxes to send to Africa. Each year, the Business Enterprise for Year 6 is a very practical topic, which equips pupils with valuable skills for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good but there are some outstanding features. The very high standards attained in science and excellent work produced by pupils in subjects such as ICT and design and technology reflect teachers' expertise in these subjects and how well they are taught. Their passion for certain subjects is communicated to pupils and as a result, the quality of learning is significantly enhanced. The management of pupils' behaviour and the respect pupils have for their teachers are other key factors ensuring that all work hard and develop positive attitudes towards their learning. Care is taken to support lower attaining pupils and to plan tasks that challenge higher attaining pupils or any with a special gift or talent. As a result, pupils are successfully engaged by their classwork and take pride in their achievements. Teachers effectively use computers to support or enhance pupils' learning, especially in the junior classes. The pictures of Year 3 pupils' sculptures superimposed on photographs of different locations, for example, was particularly effective. Information from assessments is used well by staff to set individual targets in English and mathematics, and identify any pupils who may need additional help or support. This is readily forthcoming from teachers and the skilled teaching assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The outstanding curriculum meets the needs of all pupils superbly well and as a result, pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. Good use is made of the ICT suite to enhance pupils' learning in all subjects and of the interactive whiteboards in each class which help to make lessons more interesting. A specialist teacher for Spanish, drama productions such as 'Hoodwinked', a comedy about Robin Hood and an excellent range of after-school activities add breadth to pupils' learning experiences. The Reception teacher compensates well for the lack of an outdoor learning area by using the main playground and taking pupils outdoors as often as possible to hunt for minibeasts, for example. Personal, social and health education is very well provided for in special lessons called 'circle time' where pupils sit around their teacher and discuss a range of issues. The strong links with the church and frequent visitors and visits to places of interest successfully raises pupils' awareness about worship and tolerance in our multicultural society.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides a high level of care, advice and support within a strong, supportive family atmosphere. Throughout the school, the effective use of praise and rewards leads to positive attitudes and exceptionally good behaviour. Academic support and guidance is a strength. Teachers' marking of pupils' work has been significantly improved since the previous inspection and clearly shows pupils how to further improve their work. Pupils know their individual learning targets and these are regularly reviewed. Those with learning difficulties are given excellent support by staff. This helps many to make outstanding progress. Procedures to ensure health and safety including child protection are in place and reviewed regularly. Strategies to maintain the high attendance levels and punctuality continue to be effective.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher works tirelessly towards raising standards and the quality of education in the school. Her leadership is an inspiration for all staff. Strong teamwork is evident with staff having clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Arrangements for pupils with learning difficulties are especially well managed. This results in their often excellent achievement. All staff contribute well to school improvement planning. The current school improvement plan, however, has too many priorities and the criteria to judge how effectively each one is addressed are not specific enough. Resources, including the accommodation are generally good. Excellent links with the local church, community and parents have been established resulting in strong support for the school. Effective procedures for evaluating progress and any underachievement have helped to raise standards. Most staff are regularly involved in carefully monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in order to further raise standards and quality. These are undoubted strengths, which alongside the above average standards in reading, very high standards in science and improved standards in writing, indicate the school has an excellent capacity to improve further.

The governing body has a good spread of useful expertise and is deeply committed to the school. The good attendance at meetings and challenging questions show its dedication to the school. Its role in monitoring the school's effectiveness, however, is underdeveloped.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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	1
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	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your warm welcome when I visited your school. I really enjoyed talking to some of you and looking at the displays of your work around school. The Nature Design display in Year 2 was my favourite. I also liked the three-dimensional book reviews in Year 3 and the toys and models with mechanisms in Year 5. These are the other good things about your school.

- You so obviously love being at school and behave exceptionally well in class and around school.
- How hard your headteacher works to make sure you have the best of everything. It is not surprising how the school's reputation has grown.
- The high standards you reach in reading, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and in science by Year 6.
- All the wonderful learning opportunities you have in lessons and in after- school activities. It was good to see the computer linked whiteboards being used so well in each class.
- The school takes such good care of you all and is quick to support those of you who need help.
- You have excellent links with the church, the local community and other schools.

I have asked your governors and staff to concentrate on the following to try and improve your school even more.

- Making it clear what the most important things to improve each year are and deciding what will show that staff have managed to bring about the changes they hoped for.
- Giving your governors a bigger part to play in checking how well the school is doing.

Thank you again for helping me with this inspection. I hope that you will carry on enjoying everything that school offers and try your best to make it even better.