



Giffards Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115046
Local Authority THURROCK
Inspection number 290112
Inspection dates 31 October –1 November 2006
Reporting inspector Ruth Frith

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Queen Elizabeth Drive
School category	Community		Corringham, Corringham
Age range of pupils	4–11		Stanford-le-Hope, Essex
			SS17 7TG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01375 672138
Number on roll (school)	457	Fax number	01375 677083
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Stephen Rhodes
		Headteacher	Mr Graham Giggins
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 1901		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school which was created from the amalgamation of Giffards Infant and Junior schools in January 2005. The majority of pupils live near to the school, mostly in owner occupied homes. The percentage eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds with a few coming from a range of minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average and nine pupils have a statement of special educational need. The school is currently being led by an acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher with support from a consultant headteacher.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school which is emerging from a significant period of change and is showing signs of improvement. Many appropriate new systems and procedures are in place to ensure the development of the new school and to drive up standards, but the full impact of these recent developments is yet to be seen. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and attain broadly average standards.

Staff are successful in creating an environment in which pupils feel safe and enjoy school. This is reflected in pupils' comments, 'Sometimes, I don't want to go home' and 'It's like being at home because it's all cosy'. Pupils' personal development, their well-being and their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are satisfactory. However, there are particular strengths in the pupils' moral and social development. Because of the recent focus on improving behaviour, the vast majority of pupils behave well. Pupils have a good understanding of the factors affecting their health, and the school council has made a positive contribution by introducing healthy snacks. Pupils' satisfactory basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), together with skills of collaboration and co-operation give them a satisfactory grounding for the next stage of their education and beyond.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall because although in some lessons teaching is good, the quality of teaching in others remains only satisfactory and in turn the pupils' rate of learning slows. Recent changes in the way teachers monitor and evaluate what pupils have achieved are helping them to plan work which better reflects pupils' capabilities. However, the main weakness in the satisfactory lessons is the lack of challenge for more capable pupils. The slightly above average standards of pupils who left the school last year reflect the good teaching they experienced and the rigorous challenge they received. Pupils' writing remains a weaker area although, here again, some improvements can be seen. Within an overall satisfactory curriculum, the school provides a good range of additional activities which develops pupils' interests and skills. Arrangements to ensure pupils' care, guidance and support are satisfactory. They result in pupils who feel safe in school and well cared for.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Senior managers have a clear vision and are particularly effective at channelling the enthusiasm and expertise of middle managers so that their work is becoming more effective. Governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and what needs to be done next. They, together with senior managers are working hard to ensure the smooth transfer of leadership at the beginning of next term. Because of the successful work of managers and governors and the support of staff, particularly over the last few months, the school has satisfactory capacity to improve further and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching to make sure that it is at least good in all year groups.

- Ensure that in all lessons, the work is well matched to pupils' needs and sufficient challenge is provided for more capable pupils.
- Improve standards in writing by ensuring that pupils have sufficient time to write at length in a variety of contexts.
- Ensure that all the recently introduced systems and procedures are successfully embedded and monitor and evaluate them regularly to guarantee their effectiveness.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From below average starting points, pupils generally make satisfactory progress. However, results of the 2006 national assessments for pupils in Year 6 showed a significant improvement in English, mathematics and science and the school exceeded its targets. In particular, there was a considerable increase in the percentage of pupils gaining a level above that expected for their age. Overall, pupils' results were slightly above average which, given their starting points, showed good progress, particularly in Years 5 and 6. In Reception, the children's personal and social education is developed well so that they quickly settle in school. Progress in other areas of their learning is satisfactory. The results of national assessments for the two years the school has been operating are broadly average for pupils in Year 2. Staff are successful at ensuring that most pupils reach the standard expected for their age but the percentage of those reaching higher levels is lower than the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Across the school, pupils' writing is weaker than in reading and mathematics. Apart from some more capable pupils, who do not make enough progress, other groups generally do equally well including those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Elements of their moral and social development are good but opportunities for spiritual and cultural awareness are not as well developed. An effective range of learning opportunities, such as the Emotional Skills groups, contributes to raising self-esteem and pupils' confidence increases as they progress through the school. Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school and attitudes to work are mostly good. There are a few pupils who find it difficult to sustain concentration, especially if the work does not interest or challenge them enough. Attendance is close to average and the school takes all possible steps to ensure it is as good as it can be. However, some parents persist in taking their children out of school for holidays. Pupils thoroughly understand the importance of having healthy lifestyles. They say that any incidents of bullying are quickly dealt with. Pupils' good collaborative skills and involvement in fund raising activities help to lay firm foundations for their future economic well-being. Nearly all enjoy school and value the friendships they form there. The school council gives them a voice in the

running of the school and they are proud of their achievements in bringing about change.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. While much teaching is good, it is inconsistent through the school. Strengths relate to pace, interesting lessons that help pupils to concentrate and thereby to learn securely. Furthermore, the processes by which evidence is gathered about pupils' progress are good. These are giving the staff a much better basis on which to plan work effectively, thereby ensuring that what pupils do matches their ability. That said, these improvements are very recent, so not yet fully effective. The main weakness that remains is a lack of challenge for older more able pupils in the school's mixed-age classes. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is well managed, which ensures that they progress towards their targets at a consistently satisfactory rate. In classes for pupils up to Year 2, including Reception, the quality is more consistent than for older pupils. This reflects the success of work to bring about improvement that was begun sooner in these age groups. It also means that the capacity to improve is sound, as senior leaders are beginning to roll out similar improvements for older classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. There is secure emphasis on the teaching of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Staff are developing a more innovative curriculum with an integrated approach to the teaching of all subjects, based on the good practice already in place in the lower school. This is beginning to give greater coherence to the curriculum by ensuring that skills are taught progressively. Some enjoyable and motivating experiences are provided. Use of the local environment brings subjects alive, enhancing pupils' first hand experience of learning. The introduction of a two year rolling programme is generally ensuring that there is no repetition in mixed age classes. There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and adult support is used effectively. The curriculum places appropriate emphasis on the cultures and faiths of other countries and their people so that pupils are learning how to live within a multi-cultural society. A good range of clubs and out of school activities enables pupils to extend their sporting interests, although there are fewer opportunities in the arts.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. There are some particular strengths, especially in pastoral care. Staff know the pupils and their families well. Risk

assessments are completed, ensuring pupils learn in a safe environment. Child protection procedures are in place and staff know how to raise any concerns they may have. The school council is effective in ensuring pupils' views are known. Most parents are pleased with the care and support given to their children. Pupils are increasingly taking on greater responsibility for their own learning but this is not consistent across the school. Whilst pupils know what their learning targets are, they are not using these to ensure they know how well they are doing and how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders and managers have a clear purpose and understand fully the systems by which they are checking the school's performance. However, a lot of what they are doing is new and has not yet fully influenced the school's work. Where the drive for improvement has been put in place, the impact is clearly apparent. A good example is the much improved Year 6 national test results in 2006, where considerable effort was made to ensure that pupils achieved as well as they could. Monitoring of teaching, and action taken to eradicate any weaknesses have brought about an improving picture, although inconsistencies are still apparent. Teamwork and unity are strongly apparent in the work of all leaders, including that of subject co-ordinators, and at the strategic level of the school governors, who are active and knowledgeable. They are well aware of how recent changes in organisation, such as the amalgamation and changes in senior leadership, caused uncertainty about future development and finances. However, their response is firm. The newly appointed headteacher, who is due to join the school at the beginning of next term, has been fully involved in important decisions, to ensure a smooth takeover of leadership.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

2nd November 2006

Dear Children

Giffards Primary School, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Corringham, Stanford-le-Hope, Essex SS17 7TG

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you and finding out about the work you have done. You told us how much you enjoy school and most of your parents were also positive about the school.

We think the school provides you with a satisfactory standard of education. We were pleased to see how the school is changing from the infant and junior school to Giffards Primary and know that staff will be doing more things to help this process. We were pleased with the improvements in behaviour and think that nearly all of you behave well. Keep it up! Well done! We are also pleased to see how you are trying to do your best in lessons and consequently standards are improving. School council members are working well to ensure that you can all have an opportunity to put forward your ideas and this is also working well. We were pleased to hear that you feel safe in school and would tell a member of staff if you were upset or had problems.

We have talked with the acting headteacher, staff and governors and have made some suggestions which we think will help you to learn more. So perhaps you could help them with these and try even harder. We have suggested that:

- Teaching should be at least good in every lesson
- The work given to those pupils who find learning easy should challenge them more and get them to think hard.
- Teachers should help you to improve your writing.
- Teachers should make sure that all the new things happening in school work well.

We wish you well in the future and hope you continue to enjoy your learning.

Ms Ruth Frith Lead inspector