

Gifford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101898
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	307843
Inspection dates	24–25 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Pritiben Patel

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	540
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	29
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Barry Lister
Headteacher	Miss Valerie Crookes
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Greenhill Gardens Northolt UB5 6BU
Telephone number	020 8845 4661
Fax number	020 8841 2353

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Gifford is large in comparison to other primary schools. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds including White British, Black and Asian. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average and those whose first language is believed to be other than English is nearly four times higher than found in other schools. A very large proportion of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils claiming free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with specific difficulties such as learning, language, emotional or social problems, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is also above average. The proportion of pupils arriving or leaving the school, at other than the expected times, is high. There are currently 18 pupils in the Hearing Impaired Unit. The school has attained the Healthy Schools Award. It has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) including a Nursery.

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, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the progress made by pupils and the quality of teaching and learning. Currently progress is slow and standards are exceptionally low. Difficulties with recruitment and high staff turnover have had a negative impact on pupils' progress.

Some parents expressed concerns about the behaviour of pupils, as well as the progress they are making. The inspection team found that behaviour overall is satisfactory and effective procedures are in place to deal with inappropriate behaviour, when it occurs. Mostly parents are happy with the school, particularly in relation to the pastoral support that is provided. For example, parents made comments such as, 'My son has grown in confidence and they give him great encouragement'.

Teaching over time has been inadequate as demonstrated by pupils' inadequate progress. However, staffing is now stable and the school's leadership and management are working to improve the quality of teaching and learning for pupils through monitoring, training and the coaching of staff.

Staff have created an interesting, colourful environment for pupils within classrooms as well as throughout the school. Relationships are strong in lessons and the ethos is calm and purposeful. Teachers and support staff work well together.

Leadership and management are now satisfactory. Whilst they have had an inadequate impact on the pupils' progress over time, there is now a determination among leaders to improve the outcomes for pupils. As a result of improved self-evaluation, they have worked effectively with external partners and consultants towards achieving this aim. Tracking and assessment systems are developing and are being used to identify the pupils not making expected progress, so that extra work can be provided for them. However, progress is still slow as not all teachers use the information to set work that consistently matches the needs of all pupils, and challenges them to do their best. As a result, some pupils made the following comments to inspectors, 'We have done this work before' or 'This work is too easy'. The positive impact of leadership can be seen in mathematics which has been a focus for the school. As a result of the school's actions, pupils' standards at the age of seven, although still below average, are showing improvement. Similarly, the school has done much to improve attendance, which is now satisfactory. Based on such evidence, capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

Pupils' personal development and their enjoyment of school are satisfactory. Pupils have a range of diverse needs and the school has programmes in place to help them develop their self-esteem, and improve their social and emotional well-being, which is good. Pupils with hearing difficulties are integrated well into the life of the school. For example, all staff and pupils use sign language in assembly so that all pupils feel included. Pupils' contribution to their community is satisfactory. They are trained as 'Playground Friends' so that they can help other pupils who may feel lonely. Pupils' adoption of healthy lifestyles is good as they readily eat fruit and participate in tournaments. Pupils' adoption of safe practices is satisfactory and pupils told inspectors that they feel safe in school.

The school has a positive impact on the welfare of pupils. Safeguarding procedures are securely in place. There are good procedures to help induct new pupils into the school, particularly as an above average number of pupils either leave or join the school at other than the expected times. Pupils with learning, language, hearing, social, or emotional needs have appropriate support. However, the lack of specific academic guidance and the setting of insufficiently challenging targets means pupils' progress overall is inadequate.

The curriculum is adapted to ensure that pupils develop an understanding of different cultures through, for example, 'Black History Month'. The curriculum is being developed to ensure that all pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop their basic skills through all subjects. However, due to their lack of progress in these basic skills, pupils' preparation for economic well-being is inadequate.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Pupils start the EYFS with skills, knowledge and understanding well below those usually found. Provision is satisfactory. As a result, children make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning even though they are still below expected levels for their age by the time they enter Year 1. The curriculum clearly covers all areas of learning and is well planned and monitored. The pupils' personal development and well being is satisfactory with some good aspects. Children with specific needs such as language, social or emotional, quickly settle into school routines because staff provide good support. All staff carefully monitor, assess and develop the pupils' learning through the variety of activities set. The children have a clear understanding of healthy life styles and how to stay safe; one child was overheard to say, 'I need my coat before I go outside so I do not get cold and maybe ill'. The EYFS leader has a clear view of her responsibilities and the steps required to bring about further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enable all pupils to make better progress by ensuring that activities consistently match their individual needs.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring all staff use assessment information effectively to set challenging targets for all pupils.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards have been exceptionally low over time in English, mathematics and science. This has been due to the low expectations of staff, high staff turnover, and inadequate teaching and learning. Progress for pupils as they move through the school is unsatisfactory and the school's own tracking information highlights groups of pupils, such as in Years 4 and 6, who are not making satisfactory progress in the core subjects. This includes pupils with learning, language, hearing, social, or emotional needs.

There are signs of improvement. A priority has been given to developing pupils' mathematical vocabulary and pupils are provided with more opportunities to practise their problem solving skills. As a result, progress in mathematics has improved in Years 1 and 2 which has had a positive impact on the standards that pupils have attained at Key Stage 1 in the national tests. The attainment of some of the older pupils is still much lower than it should be.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils have a good awareness of healthy eating and the importance of exercise. They know the difference between right and wrong. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness is good. Their spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils are helpful and aware of the needs of other people. Although pupils behaved well during the inspection and say they feel safe, evidence suggests there are incidents of bullying, racial abuse and bad behaviour from time to time. Pupils are clear about what to do if they have problems and know to whom to turn so that problems are sorted out quickly. The school has sound systems in place to deal with any incidents and pupils are taught to mediate to resolve minor disagreements. Pupils in the Hearing Impaired Unit develop responsibility for themselves, for example, by checking their own hearing aids and equipment. The School Councillors feel they are listened to and have made helpful contributions to the school with playground suggestions. They enjoy achieving rewards earned through the, 'Gifford LEAP Award Scheme', for contributing to the community and the, 'Premier League Awards,' for good behaviour at lunchtimes.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Due to a lack of consistency and unsatisfactory teaching over time, pupils have made inadequate progress. Although teachers now assess pupils regularly, this information is not yet being used effectively to meet the needs of all pupils. As a result, pupils either find the work set too easy or too hard. Although targets are set for the pupils, the inspection team found that not all pupils are sufficiently aware of their next steps for improvement. The marking of pupil's work is inconsistent and scrutiny of work showed little evidence of developmental marking to move pupils on. However, there are signs of improvement. For example, the school has done much work to improve teachers' knowledge and practice; for example, teachers' planning is detailed, relationships are strong and resources are used well.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum provides a personal, social, health and citizenship programme that supports personal development well. Other areas of strength are enrichment activities such as canal projects and music activities. In the transition of pupils from The Reception Year to Year 1 the continuation of planning the Early Learning Goals and a gradual shift to the Year 1 curriculum, is effective. Thereafter the work set often does not present all groups of pupils including those with specific needs such as language, hearing, social, or emotional, with appropriate challenge. However, intervention programmes such as booster groups have accelerated the progress of some pupils. The adoption of a scheme of work for mathematics has had a positive impact on standards in Year 2 by concentrating teachers' attention on what pupils really need to learn to make progress. Currently the school has an appropriate focus on writing skills and has made a good start to planning literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) across the whole curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The provision for the welfare of the pupils is a strength of the school. There are robust procedures for the care and safety of pupils including those in the Hearing Impaired Unit. The school provides effective pastoral support for pupils with specific needs such as learning, language, hearing, social, or emotional in class and in small groups, which promotes their welfare. It has the valuable services of a speech and language therapist providing programmes and guidance for staff. Links with parents, outside professionals and a range of agencies ensures all pupils have the levels of care that they need. However, academic guidance is weak. Most pupils have targets but not all understand them, as a result they are not clear about the next steps for improvement. Assessment and tracking systems are developing and it will take time before they help to drive up standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior leaders are now making a concerted effort to raise pupils' achievement, which remains inadequate, but is showing signs of improvement. Together, they work as a supportive team and have made a positive impact on teaching and learning, standards at Key Stage 1 and assessment and tracking systems as well as the EYFS. The school runs smoothly and effectively on a day-to-day basis. Subject leadership has improved from the last inspection and leaders actively monitor teaching and learning, pupil's work, as well as teachers' planning. This work is now starting to make an impact on the progress that pupils make.

The school's self-evaluation has improved and is now enabling senior leaders to focus more effectively on raising standards. Leaders at lower levels are starting to recognise the underachievement of pupils and are gaining an understanding of how to change it. Governors have always been supportive and are now starting to use their experience and knowledge to hold the school to account for the inadequate progress and standards of pupils.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	4

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	4
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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

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

23 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gifford Primary School, Northolt, UB5 6BU

Thank you for being so welcoming and helping us when we came to inspect your school to find out how well you are getting on. We enjoyed visiting your lessons, and talking to some of you at break time.

Your school works hard to look after you. Here is a list of some important things that you do well together.

- The adults in your school show care for all of you and make sure you always feel included.
- You can behave well and most of you enjoy school.
- Your understanding of healthy lifestyles is good. We were pleased to see you eating fruit, drinking water and taking part in exercise.
- Your awareness of different cultures is good because your school works hard to ensure that you know about important celebrations and events.
- You are given opportunities to take responsibility and make decisions through the school council and those of you who are 'Playground Friends' are doing a great job!
- You enjoy the extra activities that your school provides for you such as sports coaching, canal projects and music activities.
- Your headteacher, governors and all staff are working hard to make things better for you.

We think there are some things that can be improved for you. Too many of you do not make enough progress in lessons. This is very serious so we have asked your teachers to use what they know about your learning to set you targets and plan lesson activities that will stretch you and help you to do your best. In a few months time, inspectors will visit you again to see how you are getting on.

Yours sincerely,

Pritiben Patel

Lead Inspector