

Golden Flatts Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111581
Local Authority	Hartlepool
Inspection number	310631
Inspection dates	12–13 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Denis Goodchild

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	152
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Cath Hill
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Sharpe
Date of previous school inspection	1 January 2004
School address	Seaton Lane Hartlepool TS25 1HN
Telephone number	01429 274711
Fax number	01429

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized primary school and serves an area of significant social and economic disadvantage. There is a much higher proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals than average. Over a third of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities; well above the national average. In 2006–2007 the proportion of such pupils in Years 2 and 6 was much higher than a third. The school includes a unit for pupils with moderate learning difficulties and draws in pupils from across the local authority. The number of pupils leaving or joining school other than at the start of the school year is above average. The vast majority of pupils are from a White British heritage. There is small number of looked after children. The headteacher took up post in January 2007.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Golden Flatts is a satisfactory and improving school with some good features.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some good teaching in Years 5 and 6 and for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Good relationships between staff and pupils and good behaviour management help to create a good climate for learning.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Over time, results in Year 6 have been improving, but remain below average. Results in the 2007 national tests in both Year 2 and Year 6 show standards overall were significantly below average in English. This can be explained by the very high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in both these year groups. Given their low starting point, this represents satisfactory achievement overall. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are very well met and they receive very good, sensitive support from skilled teaching assistants. More able pupils make no better than satisfactory progress, particularly in Years 1 to 4. This is slower than the good progress seen in Years 5 and 6, because work is not always accurately matched to pupils' varying needs. Teachers' expectations of what pupils, especially the more able, can achieve are not high enough, and this slows progress in Years 1 to 4.

Pupils' personal development is good. This is because of the good level of care, guidance and support they receive from staff. There are good links with parents and external agencies, and parents appreciate that their children are happy and well cared for in school. Behaviour is good, but a very small minority of pupils find it hard to behave well. The very good support these pupils receive ensures that their behaviour does not impact on the learning of others. Pupils feel confident that they have someone to go to should they have any concerns. They willingly accept responsibility and their work on the school council makes a valuable contribution to the life of the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and the good range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities which promotes enjoyment of learning. Attendance has improved and is close to the national average.

The curriculum is planned satisfactorily to meet the needs of most pupils. It is particularly effective in meeting the needs of vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A strong focus on writing across the curriculum is beginning to raise standards, though computers could be used more effectively to support learning. Curriculum planning is not sufficiently modified to meet the needs of children transferring from Reception to Year 1. The curriculum effectively promotes pupils' personal development.

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is well supported by the senior leadership team. Over the past year, a number of effective strategies have been put in place to improve the quality of the school's work and, although the full impact of these has yet to be seen, there are clear signs that these are having proving effective. Governance of the school is satisfactory, and governors value the strong commitment of staff to the care and welfare of pupils. Rigorous systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the schools' performance. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and determines what the school needs to do to improve. This is confirmed by the inspection findings. The work of the leadership team is beginning to improve teaching, and standards are rising. The high morale of the staff and strong team spirit, together with early evidence of the impact of recent developments, demonstrates a good capacity to improve. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. On entry to the Nursery, most children have skills that are low compared to those typical for their age, particularly in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. By the time they enter Year 1, children have made satisfactory progress although their knowledge and skills remain well below typical expectations.

Satisfactory teaching overall with well established routines and a caring atmosphere enable children to make a positive start to their learning. There are good arrangements with parents to help new children settle. Close contact is maintained with parents who appreciate the good level of care for children's well-being and happiness. From the start, teachers carefully check children's progress and this helps them to intervene quickly where children need extra support. The teaching space is used well to provide an interesting range of activities which encourage children to make choices, cooperate or work independently. This helps them to make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. However, not all opportunities are taken to extend communication, number and early counting skills during their play based activities. The outdoor area has improved since the last inspection and children enthusiastically planted bulbs, developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. The newly appointed teacher in the Foundation Unit has made a good start and has further developed and improved procedures for checking children's progress. Nevertheless, links between Foundation Stage and Year 1 are underdeveloped and as a result, the curriculum provided for pupils in Year 1 does not always fully meet their needs.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise teachers' expectations of what pupils should achieve, particularly in Years 1 to 4, and for the more able.
- Match work more accurately to pupils' varying needs in Years 1 to 4.
- Improve the curriculum for children transferring from Reception to Year 1.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are below average. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 to reach standards that are below average. School data and inspection evidence indicate a rise in standards for the current Year 2, but they are still below the levels expected for their age.

While over time, results in the national tests for Year 6 have been improving, they have remained consistently below average. In the 2007 national tests, standards in English were significantly below average, below average in science and slightly below average in mathematics. Within this improving picture there are some weaknesses. The proportion of more able pupils achieving the higher standards was significantly lower than the national average, particularly in English. This is because expectations are not high enough, particularly in Years 1 to 4. Consequently, the school did not achieve the challenging targets set. Pupils currently make satisfactory

progress in lessons in Years 1 to 4 but progress is not rapid enough to raise standards to the levels expected for their age. Learning accelerates in Years 5 and 6 and pupils make good progress because of teachers' higher expectations in these year groups. Inspection evidence and the school data indicates that this and other school action is having a positive impact; that standards are improving. The school is confident it will achieve the challenging targets set. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those in the support unit, make good progress and achieve well because of the good sensitive support of teaching assistants and the accurate assessment of their needs.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils carry out a range of responsibilities, such as school council representatives, which enable them to contribute to the life of the school. They participate in drawing up class and school rules, contributing to their good sense of what is right and wrong. Attendance is close to average. Pupils enjoy school. They talk with enthusiasm about lessons, the support teachers offer and how there is harmony amongst themselves. Strong personal relationships with adults give pupils the confidence that they will be listened to if they have any concerns. Pupils are welcoming and polite to strangers. They cooperate well in lessons and move around school in a safe sensible manner. Behaviour is good. A very small number of pupils present challenging behaviour but skilful, sensitive handling by staff and the mature attitude of other pupils ensures that this has minimal effect on routines. An awareness of the needs of others and of their social responsibilities is well developed through pupils' studies of other cultures and contributions to charities. Pupils understand the importance of staying healthy through sensible eating and exercise. Although overall standards are below average, their good personal skills means they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are taught well and make good progress. This is because of staff's expertise in supporting pupils and the accurate assessment of pupils' needs.

Throughout the school, skilled teaching assistants are well deployed to support learning. Behaviour is managed very effectively so there is no disruption to learning. This, together with very good relationships between staff and pupils, and interesting work in lessons, means pupils are very attentive and there is a calm, productive working atmosphere in classrooms.

Typically, teaching is good in Years 5 and 6 with some outstanding elements. This is because of challenging activities and high expectations. In a Year 5 lesson, a varied range of activities and focused questioning helped pupils make very good progress in their understanding of the relationship between multiplication and division and helped them to develop problem solving strategies. In a Year 5/6 mixed age group class, pupils evaluated examples of writing and planning, and gained a good understanding of the elements required to gain the higher standards in writing. Teachers have detailed information on the abilities of pupils and this is used well to meet pupils' varying needs in Years 5 and 6. It is used satisfactorily in Years 1 to 4.

Teachers' marking gives pupils good advice on how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. Teachers' planning is detailed and makes links between different subjects. This provides opportunity for pupils to apply their basic number and literacy skills in different contexts. There is a strong focus on writing in most aspects of work and this is beginning to improve standards. Computers are not used as effectively as they could be to support learning in other subjects. The school is particularly effective in modifying the curriculum to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Curriculum planning is not sufficiently modified to meet the needs of children transferring from Reception to Year 1 and this slows progress. The curriculum caters well for pupils' personal development and class discussions provide clear moral guidance and a good awareness of, and sensitivity to, the needs of others. After-school clubs and a good range of visits and visitors add enjoyment to learning with a strong emphasis on encouraging physical activity and healthy eating. This is well reflected in the school achieving the National Healthy School Award and a Drugs Awareness Award.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Staff show a high level of commitment towards the safety and well-being of pupils. Risk assessments are in place and routines ensure pupils' health and safety. Child protection procedures and very good links with outside agencies and families ensure that the needs of all pupils, especially those who are vulnerable, are met. Skilled and well informed teaching assistants ensure that vulnerable pupils are supported well and make good progress. There are good strategies in place, drawing not only on the school's resources but also on a wide range of agencies, that have improved attendance and punctuality. The school has implemented satisfactory systems for measuring, checking and recording pupils' academic progress. Pupils are kept informed about their progress and are gradually given more responsibility for their own learning and actions as they mature.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The newly appointed headteacher and the senior leadership team work together very effectively. Morale is very high. There is a good team spirit and a shared understanding of what needs to be done in the drive for improvement. The headteacher quickly developed a good understanding of the school's performance. Apart from some modesty in judging her own performance, this is reflected in her honest and accurate school evaluation. The inspection confirms the accuracy of the school's judgements.

Good attention has been paid to developing management skills and establishing very good procedures for checking the schools' performance and tracking pupils' progress. This has helped staff to put effective strategies in place to address weaknesses. For example, the proportion of good teaching has increased. Also, more effective marking gives pupils good advice on how to improve, and school action to improve writing is beginning to raise standards. This has given managers the confidence to set challenging targets.

Governors are supportive of the management team but their role in planning the schools' development is not fully in place. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory and the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	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?	2

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
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

14 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Golden Flatts Primary School, Hartlepool, TS25 1HN

We enjoyed our visit to your school. You were very kind and friendly and you provided us with lots of information about your school. Through your school and class councils, you play a valuable part in the life of the school and you are willing to accept extra responsibilities around the school.

Your parents think that you are well cared for and we agree that your school looks after you very well. The school gives you very good advice about healthy eating and the importance of exercise. We think that you get on very well with each other and with the grown-ups in school. This makes your school a good place to be and you tell us you enjoy coming to school. Your attendance has improved this term, so well done to you and your parents, and keep up the good work for the rest of the year! We saw lots of good behaviour but a few pupils did not behave as well as others. With the very good help these pupils receive they are doing well to improve their behaviour. You say that you feel safe in school and have someone to go to should you feel upset.

Most of you make at least satisfactory progress in your lessons. Some of you make good progress, especially when the work is set at exactly the right level for you. We saw this in Years 5 and 6 and we have asked the school to make sure that this is the case in all the classes. We also think that some of you could do much harder work and reach higher standards.

Your new headteacher and the staff work hard and have already done some things which we think will help you to get better results. For example, marking is much better now and gives you good advice on how to improve. Also, your writing is getting better because you have more opportunities to practice your writing skills. Of course you will have to work hard, listen to the good advice from teachers and do as well as you possibly can. I am certain you can do it and help to make your school even better.

Best wishes

Denis Goodchild

Lead Inspector