

# St Giles CofE (Aided) Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112928
<b>Local Authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	311057
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Geof Timms

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	103
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Joan Pybus
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rev Julie Stanton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 June 2004
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Starkholmes Road Matlock Derbyshire DE4 3DD

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 November 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	311057

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**Age group** 4–11

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the leadership at all levels and its impact on the work of the school
- the provision for the most able pupils and those with specific gifts and talents
- the provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Evidence was gathered from a range of local and national data, the information that the school has on tracking pupils' progress, the school self-evaluation form, the school improvement plan, and lesson observations. Discussions were held with the headteacher and staff, a member of the governing body, parents and pupils. Parents' questionnaires were analysed and the school's systems for safeguarding pupils were checked. Other aspects were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate within the report.

## Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school on the southern edge of Matlock. A well below average proportion of the pupils is entitled to free school meals. The number from minority ethnic backgrounds is very low and few have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The main needs are specific learning difficulties, moderate learning difficulties and physical disabilities. The EYFS is provided in a separate Reception class. The attainment of most children when they start school varies widely due to the small cohort sizes, but is often below that expected.

The school has a wide range of awards including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Health Promoting Schools Award, Flagship for Food For Life Partnership, Music Mark, Gold Artsmark Activemark and an ECO award. There is a privately managed after school club run on the school premises.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school and it provides its pupils with an excellent quality of education. This is evident in the pupils' attitudes towards learning and their clear enjoyment of the imaginative lessons they are offered. It is the result of outstanding teaching and excellent leadership throughout the school. A large majority of the parents agree with the school's own view of its success and one wrote, 'The school provides outstanding care and support for children.'

The pupils reach higher than expected standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. The tracking of their progress shows that, although results can vary widely from year to year because of the small number of pupils in each year group, individually, they often make excellent progress. The current Year 6 pupils, for example, have almost all made well above the expected progress since they were in Year 2, especially in reading and writing. This excellent achievement is also evident in their current work. Standards achieved by the last Year 6 to take the national tests were not as high, but they had still made very good progress given their starting points. There was a high proportion of that group who joined the school later than the Reception year and whose attainment was lower than the school's average when they started. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is also well above that expected given their starting points. High quality work is also evident in other subjects, especially history, in pupils' books and classroom displays. There are no significant differences between the achievements of different groups of pupils. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve equally well because of the excellent support they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. The most able pupils are very well catered for and they make excellent progress. The school's detailed tracking enables talented and gifted pupils to be identified early, and the provision for them is given a high profile in planning and delivering a sufficiently challenging and enriched curriculum. Parents are informed about the provision available from the start. The school works hard to use its own resources, but also draws on outside expertise when appropriate to support these pupils. For example, one group takes part in an 'Imagineering' club run by local business people, and this helps them develop their problem solving, scientific, and designing and making skills.

The outstanding achievement is the result of excellent teaching and learning. Pupils learn well partly because the school has such a strong focus on their personal development. Their behaviour in and out of lessons is exemplary and they were attentive and focused during all lessons observed during the inspection. The school ensures they have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. Their contribution to the local and the wider community is excellent and this helps create an ethos that leads to an outstanding contribution to community cohesion. For example, there are many links with the local church and with the surrounding village. Some older pupils have made their own Christmas cards and they were selling them to others in aid of the school in Africa that they are supporting. Contacts with this school are exceptionally effective at helping extend pupils' understanding of how other people live. Recent links have also included a school for physically disabled Asian pupils in a city setting. This excellent awareness of the needs of others is evident in the way they help their friends who have physical difficulties, and older ones help younger ones in the playground or in reading sessions. The opportunities provided for pupils to work co-operatively and collaboratively, alongside the high standards in their basic skills, including information and communication technology (ICT), are preparing them excellently for their future lives.

One of the pupils said that, 'The teaching style is joyful.' Teachers plan well so that lessons are thoughtfully based on pupils' prior learning and are both challenging and brisk. A major strength throughout the school is the way the teachers' and teaching assistants' personal expertise is shared so that pupils reap maximum benefit. Most teachers work with different age groups for different subjects. Pupils get used to working with all of the staff. Teaching assistants often teach groups and are fully involved in the planning and assessing process. Where weaknesses are recognised teachers willingly work alongside each other to share their expertise and coach each other to achieve an even higher quality. For example, recent work has focused on teaching and learning styles and some staff realised they needed to introduce more active and practical activities so that the pupils who enjoyed that way of learning benefited more. Others have improved their ICT skills by working alongside and learning from their colleagues. A further strength is the way imaginative tasks are used to extend pupils' understanding. One highly successful example was the way Year 6 'invaded' the Year 3 and 4 pupils' classroom as part of a Vikings topic. The younger pupils clearly found this activity helped them understand the nature of invasion and what it meant to those being invaded.

The teachers have created an interesting and often exciting curriculum where excellent links are made between subjects. The pupils are aware of the benefits of this approach, for instance, explaining how they use computers to record radio interviews about Victorian life. The use of 'Challenge Days' and specific topic days give pupils a chance to use skills in different circumstances and makes their learning memorable. For example, pupils of different ages recently took part in a series of problem solving activities in and out of school. This was very successful and the school has recognised that more opportunities to provide pupils with creative, investigative and problem-solving skills will help raise their standards further in all subjects. Throughout all of the school's work, it is clear that pupils' safety is paramount. This is true whether looking at cleanliness while cooking, learning about teeth, or carrying out appropriate risk assessments before visits out of school. Pupils say they are well cared for and feel safe and they are happy that they have adults they can trust if they have a problem or concern. Year 6 are especially happy with one teaching assistant who started at the school at the same time as them and with whom they have built a particular affinity. This sums up the excellent ethos of support and care evident throughout the school. Safeguarding systems are robust and all requirements are met. In addition, the tracking of pupils' progress and the setting of challenging targets for them helps provide excellent academic, as well as personal guidance and support.

Much of the school's success is due to the outstanding leadership and management within the school. Most parents, as well as staff and pupils, speak highly of the headteacher. She provides an excellent quality of leadership that enables all staff including teaching assistants and others to take on leadership positions. Subject leaders are very effective and their work is clearly helping to continually raise standards and improve provision. The teamwork amongst all staff is a major strength of the school. Staff are unafraid to try new ideas and always looking for ways they can improve practice. Although the large majority of the parents are happy with the school, a significant minority feels communication could be improved. However, most parents disagree. For example, one wrote 'I feel you can always speak to a teacher if necessary and the school has a very open door policy.' Even so, the school has not addressed these concerns sufficiently in the past. The governing body is very supportive but has had a number of changes recently. It has a sound understanding of many of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There are good plans for further involvement in school but the governors have not yet developed very rigorous systems to ensure they act effectively as a critical friend. Overall, the school's excellent effectiveness is a clear indicator of its outstanding capacity to improve further.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Although it varies widely from year to year, most children enter the Reception class with skills below those typical nationally. The current group are demonstrating skills that are higher than this overall, although previous years have often had children with weaker skills, particularly in speech, language and literacy, and in their creative skills. Their progress is regularly assessed in detail and intervention planned as appropriate. Because of the excellent teaching, children make fast progress. By the end of the year, children have largely reached the levels expected of them. The EYFS is excellently led and managed and this is evident in the high quality care and support provided for the children. As a result, they feel safe and secure and develop into confident learners, well prepared for the next stage in their education. The outdoor area is used well with activities often cleverly linked to the classroom focus although there is scope to develop the external environment further. There are very strong links with parents and with outside agencies.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Create more opportunities for pupils to develop their investigative, thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Improve the governors' role as 'critical friends', so they are more knowledgeable about how to hold the school to account.

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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?	1
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?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

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

<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	1
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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

27 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Giles CofE (Aided) Primary School, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3DD

I am writing to thank you for the way you made us so welcome when we visited your school recently. You were very polite and friendly, and we were very impressed with those of you we talked to for the mature and articulate way you could answer our questions. We also think you all have a very good sense of humour!

You told us how happy you are to be at the school and many things you think are good about it. We agree because we think St Giles is an outstanding school. Your teachers work very hard to plan interesting and imaginative lessons. One of you said to us 'The teachers are amazing!' They give you work that is challenging and helps you learn new things. You help by being exceptionally well behaved and always trying hard in lessons. Because of this, you make excellent progress and reach above average standards. Well done!

The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well. All staff who have responsibilities carry them out well. We think you are especially lucky to have such friendly and hard-working teaching assistants. The school is good at offering you learning opportunities that are exciting and a bit different - like cooking King Alfred's cakes for example.

We think the school can do two things to help it get even better in future.

- Give you more opportunities to solve problems, think creatively and investigate activities and events.
- The Governors need to be more involved in the daily life of the school so they can really check how well you are all doing.

Many thanks again for your help. Enjoy your time at St Giles and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector