

St Giles' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113045
Local Authority	City of Derby LA
Inspection number	311087
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Susan Lewis

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	74
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Katy Elliott
Headteacher	Mr Patrick Walsh
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2004
School address	Hampshire Road Chaddesdon Derby DE21 6BT
Telephone number	01332 343039
Fax number	01332 207321

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Giles is an average sized special school for pupils aged 4-11 years. Originally a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, it was re-designated in September 2005 and now caters for pupils with severe and moderate learning difficulties, autism and those with complex needs. About three quarters of its pupils come from White British backgrounds; the rest come from a range of other ethnic groups, the largest group (about 10%) being from Pakistani backgrounds. Five pupils are within the care of the local authority.

As a result of their learning difficulties and/or disabilities, when they enter the school, the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are at a very low level compared with children of a similar age. The school has received many awards including Health Promoting Schools Award, Active mark, International Schools Award, and the Bronze Schools Council Award.

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. Families say that it is 'exceptional' and that their children have 'come on in leaps and bounds' since attending. Inspectors agree that in areas such as personal skills, behaviour, communication and early literacy and number skills the progress pupils make is outstanding. The way in which the staff have risen to the challenge of meeting the school's changing role since re-designation is also exceptional. They have had to acquire new teaching skills and find new ways of designing the curriculum and assessing pupils' learning. The excellent teamwork and the determination to learn from others' best practice mean the school has rapidly extended its expertise in meeting the needs of all the different groups of pupils. Not all the hard work and training has had time to impact on standards and achievement, but teaching and learning are consistently good and sometimes outstanding throughout the school and for all groups of pupils. All this and the good, highly relevant curriculum, results in good achievement and progress for all groups. The school provides good value for money.

The school has considerably improved the ways in which it assesses and monitors pupils' progress since the last inspection. This is now good and particularly strong for literacy, numeracy, personal social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE) and communication. It knows exactly how good progress is in these subjects. However, assessment and tracking of what pupils have learned in other subjects and areas of learning are still being refined. These have a sound base from which to move forward but are sometimes too focussed on what pupils have experienced rather than what they have learned. Some elements of the sensory curriculum are also still developing. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Care, support and guidance are good; pastoral care is excellent. Teaching assistants and teachers work hard to ensure that pupils are supported to gain as much independence and self-help as possible. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is also outstanding, strongly supported by the excellent PSHCE programme and the range of visits and visitors. The school's recent Health Promoting Schools, Bronze School Council and Active Mark awards are testament to how well it supports pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils enjoy school enormously and their attendance is good, despite some having complex medical conditions.

Leadership and management are good with some elements outstanding. The exceptional drive and enthusiasm of the headteacher and the senior management team, and the good support from the governing body have led to the school developing innovative approaches to meet pupils' needs, although not all have had time to raise achievement. They have led the school extremely well through all the changes. Information and communication technology (ICT) is now embedded into all aspects of the school's work and is used well to support teaching and learning. The broadening of the senior management team, the redistribution of subject and other responsibilities, the resultant quality of leadership and management at all levels and the evidence of work already accomplished, establish the school's capacity to improve further as excellent. Although the accommodation has been improved and is now adequate, a few areas are decaying, poorly maintained and equipped; others, such as parts of the outside environment, are not fully accessible to all pupils.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage has improved well since the last inspection, when it was satisfactory. It is now good, with strengths in the support for communication, language and

literacy and for personal development. Children's achievements, learning opportunities and the teaching and learning in these are outstanding. In all other areas of learning, achievement and teaching and learning are good. Provision for physical development has improved because of the good range of outdoor toys, improved play area and excellent soft play area. However, there are still shortcomings in the outside environment. The curriculum is good, because of its strong focus on establishing pupils' ability to relate to, and communicate with others, and settle down to learning. It is highly relevant and well balanced, although the planning does not always show which areas of learning are being covered and when. Good records and observations are kept that support planning. The teachers are rightly improving ways of recording progress further, so this is monitored even more rigorously in all areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that in all subjects and areas of learning pupils' experiences and learning are consistently tracked and monitored so that their achievements and levels in all subjects are more objectively evaluated.
- Improve the remaining shortcomings of the accommodation so that:
 - - all elements of the school's learning environment are accessible to all of its pupils, including the outside environment
 - - older and decaying areas of the school's fabric and building, such as toileting and changing facilities are improved.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although pupils' attainment remains significantly below others of a similar age because of their learning needs, achievement is good. Pupils of all ages, backgrounds and learning needs make at least good progress from their starting points. This is because of the good teaching and learning and the ways that staff motivate them to learn. They make good progress in subjects and excellent progress in relation to their targets in their individual education plans, in communication, speaking and listening and early literacy and numeracy skills and in their personal development. Staff use signs, symbols and specialist speaking and listening programmes to very good effect to enable this. All this is reflected in the developing skills, confidence and sociability of pupils and sets them up very well indeed for later learning and for inclusion in family and community life. A few are able to transfer to mainstream settings because of the huge strides the school helps them to make.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. The school is very successful in supporting pupils' independence and self-help skills increasing interaction with others and growing awareness of their own self worth and that of others. The excellent progress they make in their communication, early literacy and numeracy skills combined with the contribution they make to class and school councils, charity work and good enterprise activities enable them to understand and contribute well to the wider community; and prepare them extremely well for later community life and economic well-being. Staff have high expectations of pupils and a 'can do' attitude that enables pupils to believe in themselves, make simple choices and step out into new learning. Careful attention to the curriculum and the work of the school nurse promotes the pupils' understanding of healthier life styles and personal hygiene, personal

safety, including sex and drugs education very well. A 'Playground Buddy' scheme promotes friendship and play skills. Year 6 pupils develop a considerable sense of responsibility and are proud to take part in this. Pupils behave outstandingly well. Any challenging behaviour is managed particularly well and disruption is minimal. Excellent assemblies, planned opportunities for reflection, and wide-ranging cultural opportunities support pupils' understanding of their place in a wider world.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

This is a highly skilled staff; they and the pupils benefit hugely from the emphasis the school places on continuing professional development and learning from best practice. As a result, teaching and learning are consistently good and sometimes exceptional. Pupils learn well because lessons are planned to take account of individual needs, are lively and interesting and staff use a range of different ways, including ICT, to help them to understand and be involved. Teaching assistants are also highly skilled and are deployed particularly well; pupils usually have just the right amount of help to enable them to succeed, but are expected to think for themselves. A good range of interesting resources has been developed in English, for example to help teachers make their lessons even more effective. The school is developing the ways in which it uses a sensory approach to learning, where pupils have the opportunity to be immersed in an experience through touching, feeling, sight and hearing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The way the curriculum is planned and monitored ensures that the full range of pupils' needs and capabilities are catered for. Significant improvements have been made to the provision of ICT across the school, which has greatly improved the quality of pupils' learning opportunities, enabling them to build up skills well. An excellent PSHCE programme supports pupils understanding of themselves and their place within the wider world.

There is a satisfactory range of enrichment opportunities, such as lunchtime activities run by the Year 6 'mini-leaders,' and good sporting and other links with local school and businesses, such as a local football club. Residential opportunities and close working with families, a local charity group for after-school clubs and summer play schemes enrich pupils' learning opportunities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school is highly focussed on each pupil's well-being and on keeping them safe. Procedures for this are rigorous. Monitoring of progress, both academically and behaviourally, is good, but is not developed fully in all subjects. The school celebrates with joy the small but significant steps of progress that each pupil makes, although it recognises it could do even more to help pupils' understand what they need to learn to do next. Pastoral support is excellent. Pupils, including the most vulnerable and those with complex needs are extremely well cared for. The school works well with parents and support agencies to form a genuine team around the child. Checking progress towards the objectives in pupils' individual education plans and annual reviews involve parents and others very well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

These are good overall. Some elements of the school's work, such as the monitoring of achievements in all subjects by subject leaders and the curriculum changes, are relatively new. They have not yet had a full impact on all teaching or are still being implemented. However, the leadership of the chair of the governors, the headteacher and the senior team and the vision they share for the school are outstanding. This school is highly ambitious for all pupils, reflects carefully on its work and challenges itself to do even better. It knows its strengths and areas for improvement very well, recognising, for example, that they could analyse pupils' achievements further to help set realistic but even more challenging targets. It has successfully reviewed its curriculum and implemented new ways of delivering it, to meet the needs of the changing pupil population. The governing body is effective, supportive and a strong advocate for the school. They keep a watchful eye on standards, resources and the well-being of pupils, using their own talents to good effect.

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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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
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	2

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

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?	2
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	1
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	1
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

19 March 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Giles' School, Derby DE21 6BT

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school last week. We really enjoyed our visit, being in your lessons and talking with you and your teachers. Thank you to the School Council for talking with us too. We think they do a great job.

We think that Mr. Walsh is an excellent headteacher who has some super staff and governors like Mrs Elliot, to help him run the school. They have worked hard to make sure you can really enjoy being in the school and have many interesting things to do.

We know that your parents think you make excellent progress in your behaviour and in your talking, signing and listening and in the way you do things for yourself. We agree with them. We also think the school helps you to begin to read and to do your number work very well indeed.

We think the school has done well to find many different ways of teaching so you enjoy learning and to make sure you have the different things you need so everyone can learn well. We are pleased with how they help you to have a go at everything even if you find it difficult to start with.

We know that Mr Walsh and the teachers think really hard about how to make things even better. We have asked them to think about how they can improve your work in some subjects even more. We have also asked them to try to improve some parts of the school such as the toilets and areas of the playground so that they are nicer and everyone can use them easily.

With best wishes to you all

Sue Lewis

Lead inspector