

Goldstone Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114398
Local Authority	Brighton and Hove
Inspection number	311583
Inspection dates	9–10 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Liz Kounnou

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	425
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Coopey
Headteacher	Chris Pearson
Date of previous school inspection	1 May 2003
School address	Laburnum Avenue Hove BN3 7JW
Telephone number	01273 294851
Fax number	01273 739730

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school. The skills and experiences of the majority of pupils are well below the expected levels when they start school. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. About a third of the pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is higher than average. Around a third of the pupils are from minority ethnic heritages and more pupils than average speak English as an additional language. The school has gained Healthy Schools and Eco- Schools awards.

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 that is improving because of the high expectations and aspirations of the headteacher, staff and governors. Excellent links with parents have been established since the last inspection. These comments are typical of their views: 'It is a brilliant school. I am proud for my son to be there'; and 'We are absolutely delighted with Goldstone. Our daughter has made great progress, is always enthusiastic, and speaks of her school with pride.' Standards rose sharply in the 2007 national tests in Year 2, partly because parents knew how to help their children improve their skills. In Key Stage 2, standards have been rising steadily for some years. Standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. In the Foundation Stage, the quality of education is good. Throughout the school, a good curriculum helps pupils develop basic skills at a good rate, particularly in reading and mathematics. Opportunities for developing writing skills across the curriculum are less effective and, as a result, standards in writing are lower, but nonetheless improving. Most pupils achieve well because of good teaching and learning. The most able pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress, as some lessons lack challenge and do not allow them to use their initiative enough. Teachers keep a close check on how well pupils are doing and provide interesting lessons that pupils enjoy. Art teaching is outstanding and treasured by pupils. School walls are filled with exceptional artwork that brightens up the whole building. Pupils really appreciate the way that teachers value their work. Pupils' pastoral care is a strength, and they receive good guidance to help them improve their work. The process of setting targets is well established and successful because both parents and pupils know their individual learning targets. Pupils' personal development is good, and their understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle is outstanding. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community. The school council puts forward useful suggestions and many of these are acted upon. They have been proactive in running the 'Tuck Inn' to promote healthy eating at school. This helps towards the development of good skills that prepare them well for the next stage of their education. Pupils feel really safe at school, mainly because the great majority behave well all through the day. This happy school helps pupils to flourish. The headteacher's outstanding leadership lies behind this success. Leadership and management are good overall. School leaders, including governors, work well as a team and have a good understanding of how well the school is doing. However, the wealth of data collected is not analysed as sharply as it could be. Consequently, senior staff and governors are not fully aware of the rate of progress that all the different groups of pupils make as they move through the school. They visualise many more improvements and have good capacity to make sure these happen.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

By the end of the Foundation Stage, more than half the children reach the goals expected for their age. The great majority make good progress, many from low starting points. Foundation Stage classrooms are bright and cheerful, and filled with plenty of activities to capture children's attention. Some activities children select for themselves do not provide enough challenge to help them move on in their learning. Children prefer the outdoor activities and have a great deal of fun when they are working outside. Adults support children well in small groups, helping them to gain basic skills at a good rate. Children develop their early reading and writing skills well, which is an improvement on previous years. Despite this, many children struggle to write their names correctly by the end of Reception, and few form letters correctly.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects.
- Analyse data more rigorously to check how well different groups of pupils are doing in English, mathematics and science.
- Increase the rate of progress that higher attaining pupils make and give pupils more challenging opportunities to use their initiative.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and standards are improving. In 2007, there was a significant improvement in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2, with pupils reaching above average standards. The improvements were secured mainly by sharper use of target-setting and tracking information, which showed how much progress pupils were making. The higher expectations that resulted are mirrored in Key Stage 2. Standards in Year 6 have improved each year since 2005 and are now in line with the national average. School data show that Key Stage 2 pupils make more progress in Year 6 than other year groups. In 2007, Year 6 did exceptionally well. The large group of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Excellent partnerships between the school and outside support agencies enable a few of them to make outstanding progress towards their individual targets. Pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress. Very good support to help them settle in to school plays a key part in their success. The most able pupils make satisfactory progress, as some lessons lack sufficient challenge to move them on at a good rate.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is good and has a very high priority in the school. The headteacher's assemblies regularly enthral pupils. Pupils really enjoy school and are proud of belonging to the school community. As a result, attendance is above average. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enthusiastically explained that being at Goldstone is about learning as a team and helping each other out. The school council has played a big part in developing the Living Classroom and choosing new playground apparatus. Although pupils have plenty of opportunities to take on responsibilities around the school, there are fewer opportunities in lessons for them to make decisions about their work and demonstrate leadership skills. Pupils use their excellent understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle in their daily lives. Parents remark on the pressure children put on them to provide healthy lunch boxes. Pupils' good behaviour adds to the friendly atmosphere around the school. Despite this, some pupils complain that there is some silly name calling on the playground. The University of Brighton 'Professor Fluffy' project inspired many pupils to aim for a university education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

'Teachers are friendly and help us to learn,' is the view of many pupils. Good teaching throughout the school is the key reason why pupils make good progress. Marking is especially helpful, diligently ensuring that pupils know why their work is good and how to improve it further.

Teaching assistants are particularly effective in helping pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress. Thorough teaching of key literacy and numeracy skills is effective. New arrangements for teaching reading are successful in raising standards. As yet, there has not been the same improvement in pupils' writing. This is mainly because opportunities to develop writing skills in all subjects often lack challenge. In some lessons pupils are not encouraged enough to use their initiative and build consistently on their existing skills. Pupils say that sometimes teachers talk for too long at the start of lessons about aspects of learning they already know. Pupils learning English as an additional language are supported well by a very good focus on developing vocabulary in most lessons.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Pupils are very enthusiastic about the extra activities, especially sports clubs. Music has a high priority and Year 5 pupils learn to play unusual musical instruments, provided for them through excellent links with the 'Sound Makers' music project. The school aspires to excellence and has won Healthy Schools' Gold status, gained an a Silver Eco-School and is working towards an Artsmark award. Many other links with cultural organisations add greatly to the enrichment of pupils' lives and their enjoyment of school. The core curriculum is planned thoroughly and is steadily improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. However, investigative work does not have the same high priority so that some activities lack challenge.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is a real strength, from when children join the school in the Nursery through to their move to secondary school. Pupils know they can talk to a therapeutic counsellor or the 'Playtime Pals' if they are unhappy, or simply write down their concerns and put them in the 'worry box'. They know their worries will be listened to. Good quality support and guidance for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is very effective. Pupils who struggle to manage their own behaviour are supported particularly well, and great care is taken to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities play a full part in school life. Guidance to support learning is good for the majority of pupils, but not always as effective for the most able.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's outstanding leadership has transformed the reputation of the school in the local community since the last inspection. Parent after parent wrote to say how their views were listened to. A wealth of data is collected to help senior staff and governors check how well the school is doing. As a result, leaders make a good assessment of the school's overall effectiveness. The few areas where inspection judgements differ from the school's own evaluations are due to anticipated rather than actual improvements. School data help teachers and school leaders to track individual pupils' progress effectively, and to set challenging targets for improvement. This has been particularly successful in Year 2 and Year 6. However, the information about pupils' progress is not used as well as it could be to help school leaders see which groups of pupils are making the best or the least progress from year to year. As a result, there is some variation in pupils' progress throughout the school.

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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?	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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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	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	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	2
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

- 11 October 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of Goldstone Primary, Hove, BN3 7JW Thank you all for making us so welcome and helping us when we visited your school. You think it is a good school and we agree with you. The good teaching helps most of you achieve well and standards are broadly average by the time you leave school. You behave well and are proud to belong to Goldstone. The headteacher, staff and governors work as a real team to make your school even better. Here are some of the other things that we found out about your school:
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and has involved your parents in the school extremely well.
- Your artwork is brilliant because art teaching is outstanding.
- You are extremely good at knowing how to keep yourselves healthy and really try to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- The staff care for you well so that you feel safe in the school.
- Children who find the work more difficult get a lot of really good support and a few of them make excellent progress.
- The activities planned for you are good; you really enjoy all the extra activities, such as sports clubs and extra music. These are the things that we have asked the school to do to get even better:
- To provide more challenging writing activities in all the subjects so that you learn to write as well as you are learning to read.
- To check more carefully which groups or classes are making the best progress.
- To give you more chances to work things out for yourselves, so that those of you who find the work easy reach higher standards. You can help the school get even better by not calling each other silly names in the playground and always working as hard as you can. Yours faithfully Liz Kounnou Lead Inspector

Annex B

11 October 2007

Dear Pupils

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You can help the school get even better by not calling each other silly names in the playground and always working as hard as you can.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Liz Kounnou".

Liz Kounnou
Lead Inspector