

# Giles Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	117306
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312563
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 September 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	John Williams HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	238
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs S Lewis
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs S Mitchell
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2004
<b>School address</b>	Durham Road Stevenage Hertfordshire SG1 4JQ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01438 353374
<b>Fax number</b>	01438 353374

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an HMI and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Giles Junior School is of similar size to most other primary schools. The socio-economic circumstances of pupils are generally average or below. The proportion claiming free school meals is below average though a significant number of pupils take advantage of the 'breakfast club'. Almost all pupils come from homes where English is the main spoken language and there are very few pupils learning English as an additional language. There are a below average number of pupils on the school's record of special educational needs or who have a statement of special educational need. The school has received a number of awards over the years including Healthy School status, Artsmark and an Eco School award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Giles Junior School is a good and improving school that has become much more effective. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. As one put it, 'My child loves coming to school and is proud to be in the class &#61450;. Leadership and management at all levels have improved from the time of the last inspection and are good. The new senior leadership team, for example, now has a sharp focus on improving standards. Overall improvement from the time of the last inspection has been satisfactory. There is good use of data to promote higher standards, although some of the systems put in place for target setting are not embedded. Even so, the school can demonstrate good capacity to improve further given the improvements in the last two years and the current quality of teaching and leadership.

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers are becoming clearer about what they need to do to improve the standard of pupils' work. Relationships between teachers and pupils are particularly good and pupils feel safe and secure in classes. This means they take a full and active part in lessons. Their behaviour and response to adults and each other is very good and they work well in groups or pairs. Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy; they eat sensible food and take part in physical activity. The curriculum is satisfactory though improving and becoming more enjoyable and interesting in the foundation subjects. Attendance has much improved from an unsatisfactory level to good, and the measures the school has put in place to address unauthorised absence have been very effective.

Attainment when children begin school is at or a little above average. Standards by the end of Year 6 have risen in English and science to above national averages. In mathematics they have also improved from a low in 2007 and are now more in line with national expectations, though there is room for improvement with the more able pupils. Standards in the other subjects are satisfactory. Overall, therefore, pupils' achievements are satisfactory but improving.

Pupils' personal development is good. There are virtually no exclusions as the school prides itself on being inclusive in the way it deals with all pupils. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good because it engages the local community well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural and social development is good and enhanced by community links.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' progress over time by embedding the use of targets.
- Improve the numbers of pupils achieving the higher levels in mathematics by the time they leave school.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils begin school with standards that are mostly in line with or a little above national averages. Over recent years, end of Year 6 standards have been above average in English and science and average in mathematics, though they dipped badly in the latter in 2007. The school can account clearly for this disparity and managers put successful strategies in place to remedy the situation. The 2008 unvalidated end of key stage scores indicate pupils attained well in English and much better in mathematics, with the proportion of pupils gaining the expected level in English, mathematics and science being good. Achievements in mathematics have thus improved from an unsatisfactory position in 2007 although the school acknowledges that it could still

do better with those pupils capable of gaining the higher levels. Pupils' overall achievement is therefore satisfactory but getting better.

Pupils are good learners who have excellent listening and speaking skills. They enjoy working together, especially in 'talking pairs'. The school caters well for pupils who find learning difficult, and they make good progress due to effective teaching and good support from teaching assistants. Those with special gifts and talents are recognised and they achieve soundly.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school, get on well together and their behaviour is good in lessons and at other times. They play well together and some older pupils take on responsibilities such as that of peer mediators to help resolve any conflicts. Adults work hard to make sure that pupils feel safe and secure and develop self-confidence. Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' personal development and sense of community. Very good use is made of rewards and the celebration of achievements to enhance self-esteem. This has been particularly effective in improving attendance, which is now good. Pupils listen sensitively when learning about the lives of others and enjoy music from a range of different cultures such as those in South Africa. One parent commented, 'I am exceptionally pleased with the social, emotional and spiritual care'. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and physical exercise and are developing an awareness of emotional health. The school supports them to cope with their own feelings in a responsible way. Activities such as bulb planting in local parks and community singing help pupils make a positive contribution to their own locality.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The current quality of teaching and learning are good, though the impact on progress has been only satisfactory in previous years. Because it is now good many pupils are making good progress in lessons, especially those who find learning difficult. These pupils also receive good one-to-one teaching and help from teaching assistants. The more able are being set challenging work which is helping them progress well. Pupils enjoy lessons because they are given the opportunity to work with their peers in pairs or small groups and are often rewarded for their work; the class reward systems work particularly well. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject they are teaching and this makes it possible for them to pose challenging questions and respond confidently and accurately to pupils. All pupils feel their contributions will be valued and as such are given the confidence to begin to take control of their learning, though many are not sure of their individual targets. Effective classroom management creates positive relationships between teachers and pupils. Classrooms are made attractive, with some excellent displays of pupil work, and resources are good and used well so that teachers can focus support on groups whilst remaining in overall charge of the class. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used as a natural part of lessons and electronic white boards stimulate learning and increase enjoyment. However, opportunities are missed to teach ICT subject knowledge, skills and understanding in passing. Marking has improved and provides pupils with good advice, and, when set, homework is appropriate and contributes to pupils' learning.

## Curriculum and other activities

### Grade: 3

The curriculum meets national requirements and includes French for all age groups. Use is made of a local network of six primary schools to enrich the curriculum by providing special programmes such as the Gifted and Talented Arts Day. Those pupils who find learning difficult make good progress because the curriculum is matched to their needs and good use is made of their individual education plans. Staff clearly know and understand the provision for literacy, numeracy and ICT and this is having a satisfactory impact on pupils' future economic well-being. The school has recently introduced the International Primary Curriculum for some foundation subjects and, though this is at an early stage of development, it is beginning to strengthen cross-curricular links. There is a range of clubs and activities which augment the curriculum. Visits, including residential visits, support pupils' learning and understanding of the wider community. Appropriate use is made of special weeks and the achievement of awards such as Artsmark, National Healthy Schools and Eco Schools status to develop understanding in a stimulating way.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Pastoral support for pupils is very good. The appointment of a pastoral learning support assistant (LSA) means that there is now a key adult to support pupils who have emotional and social issues that prevent them from making good progress. The Acorn Room provides a haven for 'time-out'. The lunchtime arrangements are effective because of the good liaison between lunchtime supervisors and the pastoral LSA. Individual support for pupils with poor attendance has resulted in positive improvements. The school uses an effective programme to develop pupils' understanding of staying safe and arrangements for safeguarding are fully in place. There are good procedures in place to protect and support vulnerable pupils, with thorough training for all staff. Teachers provide satisfactory academic support for their pupils by regular marking which helps them to understand what to do next. Although teachers share success criteria with pupils, most pupils do not know or understand their individual targets to help them make better progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good throughout the school; the impact on community cohesion is also good. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have both challenged and supported the school well in order to improve, particularly where issues were raised about leadership and standards in mathematics. Their impact on school improvement is good.

The school has a relatively new senior leadership team that is developing well. This team have an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses in their areas because the monitoring of teaching and learning is accurate and takes place regularly. Subject leaders are beginning to carefully monitor pupils' progress against their targets and are putting strategies in place to support those who are not making the expected gains. Finances have been used appropriately to promote improvement in areas designated as weak and there is evidence of a rise in standards. Improvement planning is linked to accurate self-evaluation; the managers know what they need

to do to improve and have identified the correct ways of doing it. Everyone else in the school knows what needs to be done to improve further and they understand their role in this process. Given recent progress, the structures and people in place and the accurate targets set, the school demonstrates good capacity to improve further.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

**Achievement and standards**

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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>	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
The extent to which 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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B**

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

18 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Giles Junior School, Durham Road, Stevenage, SG1 4JQ

Thank you for making Mrs Stopher and I so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting and talking with you.

Giles Junior School is an improving school. You seem to enjoy the lessons and many of you are much better at coming to school regularly than in the past. You reach good standards in English and science and are getting better in mathematics by the time you leave, but the school recognises that this could be better for those of you able to achieve the higher levels in mathematics. We have asked them to look at ways of doing this. Much of the teaching is good and you clearly enjoy what you are doing, especially when you work in pairs or in groups. You work well with each other, the teachers and teaching assistants and behave very well.

Mrs Mitchell and all the teachers and teaching assistants take good care of you and they will be trying hard to make sure you know your targets so that you can do even better. The staff will be trying to find more ways of helping you do this. As you sang in assembly this week, 'You can do it if you really try'!

I hope you will continue to enjoy and do well at Giles Junior School.

Yours faithfully

John Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector