

Gamston C of E (Aided) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122801
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	314406
Inspection dates	7–8 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Roger Brown

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	88
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Geoffrey Hardy
Headteacher	Mr Kevin Fitzpatrick
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Stanboard Lane Gamston Retford Nottinghamshire DN22 0PE
Telephone number	01777 838631
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

The school is smaller than the average sized school. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds with almost 20% from different cultural and minority ethnic backgrounds. Most of these are from the local Muslim community and around ten percent of these do not speak English as their first language. Just over six per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who need additional support is in line with that found nationally. Significant numbers of pupils join the school after the normal starting point. The average level of development for children starting at the school is usually in line with national expectations in most respects.

The school has an award from Active Schools, a gold level Healthy Schools award and Investor in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This effective school prides itself both on its family atmosphere and its central role to the communities it serves. The new school building and spacious, attractive grounds are used well. They form a first-class setting for the good quality of education that the school provides. Parents value the school and are very positive about it. 'A shining example of how primary education should be run', being typical of the responses to the inspection questionnaires.

By the time they leave at the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards in all areas that are usually above the national average. From the time they start at the school to the time they leave, pupils make good overall progress, and their achievements are good. Standards are highest for all age groups in reading. There is a more inconsistent picture in mathematics and science where the standards of some groups, usually the boys, tend to fluctuate. A similar pattern emerges for standards in writing. There is no firm trend, but it is apparent from the school's good quality tracking systems that in some year groups, fewer boys reach the higher levels in writing. Staff make good provision for those pupils who need extra support with their learning as well as for those who do not speak English as their first language.

The inclusive Christian ethos that forms the basis for the work of the school is clear. Everyone is welcomed and their contributions, whatever their background, are celebrated. This widens pupils' horizons and leads to the good quality of pupils' personal development and well-being. They have terrific opportunities to take part in sport and other activities, making their understanding of what they need to do to be healthy outstanding. Pupils' excellent understanding of safety issues alongside the wide-ranging nature of the curriculum lead to their outstanding enjoyment of school. 'A fun place to learn', is not just the slogan at the front of the school, but is an accurate statement about the nature of the school. The care, guidance and support that the pupils receive and use are good and all statutory requirements are fully met. Pupils get good quality guidance in the development of their skills and understanding. A year 6 pupil explained, 'Teachers don't usually tell us what we have to do to improve, but hint at how we can make things better. That way we have to think for ourselves and we know that it is our ideas and work that are in our books.'

The impact of teaching on pupils' learning is good, and at times outstanding. In the best lessons, the pupils are both challenged and motivated to work at very high levels. The curriculum is developing well. Information and communication technology (ICT), a weakness at the time of the last inspection is now effective in supporting the development of pupils' learning across all subject areas. However, although pupils' progress in ICT is assessed well, this information is not aligned with the other subject areas making it harder for teachers to accurately match pupils' needs in this aspect.

The highly respected headteacher leads the school very effectively and leadership and management are good. Staff are empowered to take a lead, and as several parents noted, make a great team. They are well supported in this by the governors

who led the long, but successful campaign to get the new school. The governors are well informed about the work of the school, clearly understanding its strengths and needs. Given the successful progress since the last inspection, the capacity for further improvement is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The small number of children in the Reception class join the school from a variety of pre-school settings. At times during each day they are integrated with the pupils in Years 1 and 2, but they also have good opportunities to work as a separate group under the skilful direction of a nursery nurse. The new building has no discrete area for the Foundation Stage, but the staff make the best use of the provision to ensure that the children experience a good range of learning activities, both indoors and outside. Good quality assessment procedures allow the staff to track their progress effectively and to plan activities that match their individual needs and rate of development. Information from the school's profiles of the children indicates the trend over three years is for children to make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Most start with a level of skills and development below that expected, but many are achieving in line with the expected levels by the time they move into Key Stage 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards of writing, focusing particularly on the achievements of the boys.
- Align the tracking of pupils' progress in ICT with the good practice that already exists in other subject areas.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are usually above those expected at the end of both key stages. The pupils make consistently good progress in reading. However, the trend in other subject areas is more variable, especially for the boys and there is no clear pattern to this. Staff make good use of high quality information about the progress of pupils to address the variable progress. As a result, few pupils fail to attain standards that are not at least in line with national averages, but at times, some of the boys fail to attain the higher levels reached by many of the girls, especially in writing. Pupils with specific learning needs, and those for whom English is not their first language make good progress relative to their starting points. This is because all staff are aware that they need to ensure that the progress of individuals must not be allowed to falter.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

A strong emphasis on safety, a healthy lifestyle and caring for each other, the community and the environment makes this school genuinely a 'fun place to learn.' A rich variety of sporting opportunities and arts activities which everyone has the chance to take part in, reinforces the fact that this school is about giving the pupils a broad foundation upon which to build their adult life. The pupils are committed to the school community and they revel in the opportunities to take responsibility. They contribute to the school council, act as 'playground buddies', raise money for charity, plan their own environment and grow their own vegetables. It is little wonder that they enjoy school and attend well. The older pupils would relish even more opportunities to take a lead and already have tentative ideas as to how they can open their school to the village community and beyond.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

All pupils behave well in class and are attentive because they are thoroughly engaged by the activities the teachers offer. Consequently, the long-term impact of teaching on pupils' learning is consistently good. In the very best lessons teachers make impressive use of the interactive whiteboards, the work they devise is challenging and clearly motivates the pupils. Thorough assessments build detailed pictures for the development of each pupil. Effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants then enables this information to be used to ensure pupils make secure progress in the development of their skills, knowledge and understanding. Even so, the staff are aware that more work is needed to achieve consistently high standards.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

There is good provision for teaching essential literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers are developing the curriculum to incorporate the new national initiatives, and in doing so, are integrating different subjects in imaginative ways. This provides pupils with a rich diet of interesting work and experiences that build their wider knowledge and understanding very effectively. The creative and inventive use of varied and wide-ranging extra-curricular activities actively promotes pupils enjoyment of learning. ICT now plays an important part in supporting the pupils' learning, and the pupils commented on this enthusiastically. However, staff acknowledge that the system for recording pupils' progress in ICT is not integrated into the school's systems for other subjects and is less effective in promoting their development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils correctly believe that the care, guidance and support they receive are good. They are proud to be at the school, speaking enthusiastically about how their work is valued, praised and developed by the staff. Teaching assistants are deployed very effectively and their work gives great support to individual pupils' development. Very careful attention is paid to the pupils' welfare. Child protection procedures meet requirements and are well established and rigorously maintained. The good quality systems to check pupils' academic progress are effective at preventing pupils from falling behind, but are not used as successfully to consistently promote the higher levels of learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The clear vision of the headteacher and the tone he sets permeates throughout the school and is reflected in the success of the staff team. They are apparent in the high quality of relationships that are seen at all levels in the school. The leadership knows the school's strengths and needs well. Governors, have a strong level of commitment and involvement with the school. They and the staff recognise the need to promote more consistent progress of those pupils who are capable of attaining the highest standards.

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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 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	2
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	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
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

9 April 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Gamston C of E (Aided) Primary School, Retford DN22 0PE

Thank you for being so friendly when I visited your school. I would like to share with you what I found when I spent time in your lessons and talked with you and your teachers.

I think you go to a good school. I was impressed with the new building and the grounds. I was particularly pleased to hear that you have been involved in designing some of the features, and that the school council used their initiative to raise money for the playtime activities you use. As I watched you at playtimes, I could see that the system of 'playground buddies' works really well. I could see that you all get along together and I liked the fact that it was not just the 'buddies' who took good care of the younger children. I think that it is wonderful that you have so many great opportunities to take part in sports and arts activities. No wonder you told me that you enjoyed school so much. I was also especially pleased by your excellent understanding about keeping yourselves healthy and fit.

When I watched your lessons and looked at your work, I could see that the standards you attain are usually better than those normally found in most schools. I could see that your teachers and teaching assistants work really hard to help you to learn. Even so, I have asked your teachers to work out some new ways to help develop your writing. Your reading skills are good, and I know from my discussion with Year 6 that you enjoy writing, but I still think that there is more that could be done to improve the standard of your writing, especially the work of the boys.

Whilst discussing your achievements with your teachers, I could see that they have some great ideas and good systems to help you to progress with your work. To make these even better, I have asked them to try to find ways in which they can extend the systems they now have, and introduce something similar for information and communication technology.

Thank you once again for your warm welcome.

All the best for the future.

Roger Brown Lead inspector