

Guildford Grove Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132758
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	316007
Inspection dates	13–14 November 2007
Reporting inspector	George Rayner

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	420
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Joe Bullock
Headteacher	Ms Elizabeth Corlett
Date of previous school inspection	31 March 2003
School address	Southway Guildford GU2 8YD
Telephone number	01483 504713
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is larger than other primary schools. It was formed in 2001, following a re-organisation of primary education in the area that resulted in the closure of four schools. In 2006, numbers rose significantly when the school absorbed pupils from another closed school. Although located in an affluent town, there are pockets of deprivation. While pupils' home circumstances are a little less advantaged overall than those nationally, there is considerable variation in their individual experiences. Most pupils are of White British heritage, although the proportion from ethnic minorities has recently risen and the range of ethnic groups is considerable. The proportion of pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English is broadly average. An above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities. The school provides a resource for pupils with profound hearing and multi-sensory impairment, called The Lighthouse. This currently has twelve pupils on its roll.

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 with outstanding features. The headteacher is tremendously proud of the pupils for the progress that they make in their personal development. She is right to be so. Many pupils arrive at the school with very limited social skills. The impact of the school's influence is demonstrated in the excellent role models that the older pupils provide for the younger ones. The school is a very harmonious community and relationships are characterised by mutual respect. Adults and pupils who have been here since the school's formation say that there has been a huge improvement in the school's ethos and working atmosphere since the last inspection. Pupils become very confident and proud members of their school community. One demonstrated the feelings of many by saying, 'We love school. It is the best school and the teachers are our friends.' Pupils show a real love for learning and enthusiastically join in with all that the school has to offer, inside and outside the classroom.

Outstanding care, guidance and support assure pupils' excellent personal development and well-being and the excellent curriculum also makes a major contribution. Although standards are below average, the pupils achieve well and make good progress in relation to their starting points. This is because the teaching is good. Teachers have a good understanding of their pupils' needs and plan well to meet these. They assess pupils' progress very well. Lessons usually finish with an opportunity for pupils to reflect upon their own learning. These activities are not always well enough planned however, to involve pupils in their own self assessment as well as they could.

Leadership and management are good with some outstanding elements. The headteacher has provided excellent leadership during the challenging circumstances of the school's formation and early development. She has been highly effective in providing clear guidance, balanced with the scope for colleagues to genuinely lead and be accountable for their areas. The headteacher is ably supported by a highly cohesive senior team and committed and effective middle management team. The school has secured good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have improved in science, and particularly in English, in which for the first time since the school's formation, pupils are now reaching broadly average standards. Mathematics standards have improved in Years 1 and 2 due to recent improvements in teaching that are helping pupils to become better at developing their basic skills. The school is aware that there is more to be done in Years 3 to 6, where mathematics standards have not improved well enough compared with English and science. The school's track record and clear focus on what still needs doing show that it has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with very low levels of knowledge and skills in all areas of learning. A strong focus on personal development throughout the Foundation Stage helps children to build positive relationships and become good learners. This results in their personal and social skills almost reaching expectations by the end of the Reception Class. In other areas of learning, most children's attainment is still significantly below expectation when they start Year 1. Nevertheless, they have made good progress from their starting points. The school has recently upgraded the accommodation to establish a self-contained Foundation Stage Unit. Staff are quickly starting to use the improved facilities, including the excellent outside areas, to provide a highly stimulating variety of activities. Assessment procedures are robust and effective in

identifying children's starting points, measuring their progress and planning their next steps in learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the teaching in Years 3 to 6 has a greater impact on accelerating pupils' progress and improving standards in mathematics.
- Ensure that lessons always provide effective opportunities for pupils to recap and reflect on what they have learned, so that they understand what they have to do to move on.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Although pupils' overall standards are below average by the end of Year 6, they achieve well in relation to their starting points. Pupils make very good progress in English. Most learn to read proficiently and develop the skills to write in interesting ways for a variety of purposes. This is helping to improve science standards as, although these are still below average, pupils are becoming better at carrying out their own investigations and accurately writing about what they find out. Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 6 are well below average and should be higher. Although satisfactory, pupils make slower progress in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 compared with English and science. They become competent in basic skills, but often find it difficult to use these to promptly and accurately deal with mental mathematics problems. Because their needs are very carefully identified and efficiently provided for, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with profound hearing and multi-sensory impairment, make as good progress as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils know that if they have a problem they can talk to the adults and are confident that they will be given the help they need. They choose healthy lunches and enthusiastically take part in the many sports and activities provided. The attendance rate is good, in view of the challenges provided by the school's context. It was well below average at the time of the last inspection. Since then, pupils have responded well to the school's efforts to reduce absence and the attendance rate has risen each year, so that it is now coming close to the national average. The school councillors are developing excellent team and leadership qualities. They use their own initiative to help other pupils by, for example, encouraging them to eat healthily or to settle any disagreements. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They say that they love the many opportunities to learn about other cultures through exciting activities in areas such as art, music and cooking. These contribute to their excellent understanding of customs and cultures in other parts of the world. Pupils are acutely aware of those who are less fortunate than themselves and enthusiastically participate in a wide variety of fundraising activities. Their good development of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills prepares pupils well for their futures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers set out their expectations for behaviour and effort clearly and succeed in generating good relationships, resulting in high levels of motivation and participation from pupils. Lessons usually begin with a stimulating activity that makes pupils ready and eager to learn. Teachers successfully use a range of strategies and resources to ensure that all pupils are provided for and fully involved. This was seen in a lesson where pupils enjoyed devising mathematical problems for others to solve. Together with teaching assistants, teachers ensure that all who need extra help to keep up with work quickly receive this. In English lessons, teachers ensure that pupils understand important words and give them frequent opportunities to write in different styles. This has contributed to significantly improved English standards. While the teaching of mathematics in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, teachers are not providing enough opportunities for pupils to apply their mental arithmetic skills to problem solving tasks. Generally, lessons are well timed, except that the closing activity does not always give sufficient time for pupils to effectively recap on their learning and make sure that they are fully secure before moving on.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum makes a major contribution to pupils' excellent personal development, by encouraging them to become enthusiastic, confident and valuable members of the school community. One way in which this happens is the strong accent on the creative arts. The impact of this was demonstrated by the excellent lead given to the rest of the pupils by the school choir during a singing assembly. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is very well thought out and effective. The school has specialist provision for pupils with reading difficulty, called 'Reading Recovery'. The staff use innovative ways to motivate and raise the confidence of these pupils, which have had considerable impact on their standards. The school uses its good ICT resources well so that pupils can enhance their learning in all subjects. Enrichment is excellent. 'Focus' weeks, with topics such as healthy living and life in other places, provide superb opportunities to extend pupils' understanding and cultural horizons. Visits and visitors regularly enhance pupils' appreciation of the arts and the environment. There is a wide range of clubs and participation is high.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Staff have a high commitment to pupils' well-being and a genuine affection for them. The resulting relationships contribute strongly to pupils' enjoyment of school and sense of security. Parents highly praise the provision for pupils with profound impairment. One said, 'The advice and the level of support which my daughter receives in The Lighthouse are excellent.' The pupils there benefit greatly from the expertise of highly qualified specialist providers. Safeguarding arrangements are very rigorous in minimising risk around the school or on excursions. The school has excellent partnerships with outside agencies to provide high quality specialist support whenever necessary. Highly detailed records of each pupil's progress are used to set individual targets which very effectively balance challenge and realistic expectation.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

There is a high degree of unity in supporting the headteacher's very clear leadership and commitment in the drive for improvement. Subject coordinators have clear views of the way forward for their areas and are leading their colleagues effectively in pursuing these. They are beginning to improve their effectiveness further by developing a team structure to enhance the sharing of ideas and information. A team of phase leaders has recently been put in place. The members are still learning the skills needed for their roles, but are already beginning to have an impact in helping to ensure consistency and the sharing of important assessment information between year groups. Governors are well informed, highly committed to the school, and prepared to challenge it when necessary. The school values and takes good account of guidance from local authority advisers. This has helped it to develop rigorous procedures for self-evaluation, which have provided an accurate view of the areas that have needed improving.

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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?	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
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	1
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

26 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Guildford Grove Primary School, Guildford, GU2 8YD

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and we are grateful for the help you gave by talking to us and showing us your work. We were able to see that yours is a good school. Some things about it are very good indeed. You make good progress in almost all of your learning. We could see that the help that teachers have given you in your reading and writing is making sure that you make very good progress in English. Your teachers know that they have not given you enough practice in mental mathematics. This is one reason why your progress has not been quite as good in mathematics. We have asked them to give you more practice as soon as possible.

Your teachers often give you interesting things to do and we could see that you enjoy this very much. You show this by working hard and being very well behaved. At the end of lessons, teachers often ask you to think about what you have done. They do not always give you enough time to think about how well you have learned and whether you are ready to move on. We have asked them to make sure that they always leave enough time for this in lessons.

Staff told us that they are very proud of you. They think that you grow up very well and that this is really helping them to do their very best for you. We could see that this is true. Not long ago, the absence rate at your school was much higher than in most schools. We were pleased to see that each year, more and more of you are coming to school regularly. We hope that this will continue, as this is very important to make sure that you do not miss out on all the good things that are happening in your school.

We could see that you are very well cared for. Lots of you told us how much you love school and that you feel very safe and happy there. It is clear that you and the adults have worked together to make your school even better. The headteacher and staff know how to make the school even better still and are working very hard to make sure this happens. We know that you will continue to help them.

Very well done to you all and very best wishes for your futures.

George Rayner

Lead Inspector