

St Giles School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101852
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	323538
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2008
Reporting inspector	Mike Smith

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–19
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	99
Sixth form	5
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Michael Swadling
Headteacher	Mr Sean Kretz
Date of previous school inspection	20 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Pampisford Road South Croydon CR2 6DF
Telephone number	020 8680 2141
Fax number	020 8681 6359

Age group	4–19
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Giles provides for pupils who have statements of special educational need for a wide range of difficulties. They include physical difficulties and complex medical needs and, since January 2008, the school provides for secondary aged pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). There are nine children in the Early Years Foundation Stage provision (EYFS) and five students in the sixth form (PMLD unit). Although priority is given to Croydon pupils, the school takes pupils from a number of other London boroughs. Pupils come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and a higher than average number are eligible for free school meals. Just over a third of pupils are from a range of ethnic groups, the largest being from Black African or Caribbean family backgrounds. A small number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English and there are nearly twice as many boys as girls. Fifteen of the eighteen pupils who are looked after by local authorities receive respite care, but live at home. The school has held a number of prestigious awards and currently holds the Healthy School Award, Investors in People and the Inclusion Qualitymark. The school offers support and advice to other schools who have pupils with a physical disability and is currently applying for Specialist School status for physical and sensory needs.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school because leaders, managers and all staff put pupils' achievement and well-being at the top of their agenda. The dedicated and effective headteacher has a clear vision for driving improvement, which is shared by the whole school. He offers excellent support to all staff and is supported very well by a highly competent deputy headteacher. The school has not 'rested on its laurels' since its last outstanding inspection report. Committed staff and well-informed governors, continue to refine and improve the provision and learning opportunities for all pupils. There are well established cycles of monitoring and self-evaluation that involve the whole school and development planning shows staff have a clear understanding of what needs to improve and how to achieve success.

Teamwork is a strength of the school, as is the sharing of best practice between all staff. There is exceptionally well-planned care and seamless support offered by the medical and therapy staff, which contributes significantly to pupils' personal development and well-being. Pupils are treated with respect and dignity at all times. A parent, reflecting the views of many, wrote, 'St Giles is a fantastic school. My son has gained so much confidence and independence since starting there. All staff take the utmost time to treat all children as individuals.' The school is a strong community, nurturing pupils' personal and academic development and celebrating their achievements. Very effective partnerships with external support agencies, schools, colleges and the community ensure pupils' personal needs are very well met. This demonstrates excellent improvement since the last inspection. The school provides valuable support to other schools and training opportunities for teachers, which are very well received and appreciated.

Due to the severity and complexity of some pupils' learning difficulties and disabilities, standards overall are very low. Given their starting points, and the nature of these difficulties, the progress and achievement of the great majority of pupils are outstanding. Children in the EYFS gain confidence and make excellent progress in their communication skills and personal and social development, which are built upon successfully as they move through the school. Pupils learn to improve their independence, make choices and work towards challenging targets. Pupils' personal development is outstanding because of their exceptional attitudes to learning and their excellent relationships with each other and staff. All of this is nurtured most effectively by the outstanding care, support, guidance and teaching they receive. Pupils' progress is monitored, recorded and analysed effectively, which ensures they receive the level of support and challenge they need to progress. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development very effectively. The school is rightly aware of the need to develop activities that promote learning through an emphasis on the senses to ensure the curriculum continues to meet pupils' ever changing and complex needs. Exciting and interesting activities are planned, which motivate pupils to learn. Visits abroad and into the community, inclusion placements in mainstream schools and colleges and visiting specialists all enrich pupils' learning experiences.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and they make an excellent contribution to the community. Pupils show consideration and support for each other and their behaviour is excellent as a result. Parents are consistent in their praise for the school. One wrote, 'My child has come on in leaps and bounds since starting and is altogether a happier girl.' Governors are well-informed and are fully involved in monitoring, evaluation and strategic management. The capacity to improve even further is excellent.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 1

There are only five students of sixth form age and they are part of the newly established and very effective PMLD provision. Students transferred to the school in January 2008 and are already making very good progress, particularly in their personal development. This is a result of the dedicated staff and the school's outstanding provision. Resources are used very effectively and imaginatively to motivate students and to make learning fun. Students are being well prepared for the next stage of their education and life outside of school and have opportunities to gain appropriate accreditation.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children get the best possible start to their education when they join the school in the Reception class. Excellent teaching and support, together with detailed assessment and planning, ensures activities are well matched to childrens' different learning needs. Accommodation and stimulating learning resources are used very imaginatively to promote each area of learning inside the classroom and in the covered outdoor play area, which offers a wide range of physical and exploratory activities. Excellent leadership and management ensure an ever improving provision that ensures children learn and develop as well as they can. There are productive links throughout the school promoting progression in childrens' learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Monitor and improve the sensory curriculum so that it continues to meet pupils' increasing medical and complex learning needs.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

The excellent progress made by children in the EYFS continues as they move through the school. Pupils demonstrate a very wide range of ability and standards vary from very well below, to in line with national standards. There are pupils who are capable of taking, and achieving, GCSE examinations in line with their mainstream peers. Other pupils make very small steps of progress but will, nevertheless, achieve relevant accredited qualifications and a variety of Certificates of Achievement. All pupils, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, take up college places when they leave school. Pupils make excellent progress in vocational skills as a result of the effective provision for work related learning. The outstanding progress in their personal and social development is because of the highly effective development of their social, communication and independence skills, which are promoted in all lessons. As a result, pupils' preparation for the future is excellent. Pupils work towards challenging targets and they are always encouraged to do their very best. As one pupil said, 'I love all my lessons and now I can read, which is great'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

As pupils move through the school they rapidly grow in confidence and self-esteem. Pupils learn to understand all aspects of keeping healthy and safe and take part in a wide range of sporting activities. The dance club during lunchtime is very popular. Their extremely positive

attitudes are reflected in their excellent attendance, behaviour and in their enthusiasm for learning in all lessons. Pupils' relationships with staff and each other are outstanding with mutual respect shown at all times. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to their community through a variety of fund-raising events, through the work of the school council and by helping and supporting each other. As one pupil said, 'It's all brilliant here and I would not change a thing. I have lots of friends and the work is always made interesting'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Excellent relationships help pupils gain the confidence to do their very best. A parent said, 'Our daughter is doing very well and this is the result of all the hard work by the teachers and support staff'. Lessons are planned in detail and take account of the wide and varied learning needs of the pupils. This results in pupils making excellent progress in lessons. The school has an accurate view of the quality of teaching and learning and leaders give excellent support and guidance to ensure that first-class teaching and learning are maintained. Information on pupils' progress is used well in lesson planning and pupil targets provide appropriate challenges. Ongoing feedback and support by teachers and the very effective teaching assistants make it very clear to pupils how they can improve. Excellent teamwork and use of resources, together with the close observation of pupils' needs, ensure all pupils get the very best out of all their learning opportunities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is very well planned, reviewed and adapted to ensure its relevancy for all pupils. As a result, all pupils, including those with PMLD, are fully engaged in their learning. The school recognises that the sensory curriculum is increasingly relevant to pupils of all ages and appropriate staff training has been given and is taking place. There are excellent opportunities to enrich pupils' learning, through a wide range of school visits, clubs and through attendance in mainstream schools whenever relevant. These opportunities greatly enhance academic and personal development and make an outstanding contribution to pupils' enjoyment and understanding of the wider world around them.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Efficient and consistent school procedures and practices keep pupils safe and secure, while promoting their independence. This results in confident pupils with positive attitudes. The outstanding relationships between staff and pupils are clearly evident throughout the day. The very high quality teamwork and planning between senior staff, teachers, teaching assistants, nurses and therapists ensure pupils' personal needs are very well met. Vulnerable pupils are identified quickly and monitored carefully to ensure their well-being. Parents say that communication between home and school is very good. A parent wrote, 'My daughter is very happy in school. Her educational, social and physical needs are very well met and we are encouraged as parents to be fully involved'. It is made clear to pupils in lessons how they may improve and they receive very effective guidance on future opportunities. The transition from one stage of education to another is planned and supported very carefully.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership and management are outstanding. The headteacher has high expectations of all staff and leads by excellent example. Leaders and managers at all levels have clear roles and responsibilities and promote high quality care and learning. All work undertaken by staff is valued and consequently their morale is high. The impact of everyone's work is clearly seen in the outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils, which in turn leads to their outstanding personal development and achievement. Staff induction and support arrangements are very effective and result in all staff being clear on how to best meet the needs of all pupils. Training and professional development is a strength of the school and is clearly based upon the school's priorities for improvement and the changing needs of the pupils. Teaching assistants have a range of responsibilities and contribute very successfully to pupils' achievement and well-being. Links with external providers, services and other organisations successfully support the integration of care and education to enhance learning and promote well-being and community cohesion. A parent summed up the feelings of many when she said, 'This is an excellent school with friendly and professional staff. Any concerns are effectively dealt with and everyone works as a team'.

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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	16-19
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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?	1	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1	
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1	
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1	
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1	
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1	
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1	

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	1	

¹Grade 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

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	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	
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1	
The attendance of learners	1	
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	1	

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1	1
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	1	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1	
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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**

26 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Giles School, South Croydon, CR2 6DF

Thank you for making my visit to your school such a pleasurable one. I really enjoyed meeting you all. A particular thanks to those pupils I met in the school council and who told me all about their school. Also, thanks go to those pupils I met during break time and who made me smile with their wicked sense of humour. You are all excellent representatives of your school, being polite, very well behaved and friendly. You get on very well together and really enjoy coming to school. I agree with you and your parents that your school is excellent and helps you to do your very best. I think that you make excellent progress in your work and in your personal development. All staff work really well together to make sure you get the extra help you may need. Many of you can help by keeping a close watch on your targets and working as hard as you can to achieve them. I particularly liked that:

- you learn to do things for yourself and you consider the needs of others
- you thoroughly enjoy your lessons which are made interesting and you work very hard to improve
- you learn to be healthy and safe
- you like to take responsibility and you very effectively support your community
- you learn useful skills that will help you when you leave school
- the school works very effectively with other people to ensure you receive the support you need
- all staff attend training to ensure they are skilled at meeting your various needs
- the school is very well led and managed and always has your very best interests at heart.

There is an area that the school wishes to develop further, and I agree that they should. It is:

- to develop learning activities that involve the use of all your senses - touch, smell, taste and hearing -, to help some of you understand and explore your own learning.

Thank you once again for being so friendly and I wish you all every future success.

Best wishes

Mike Smith

Lead Inspector