

Gilded Hollins Community School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106431
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	324398
Inspection dates	13–14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Brian Padgett HMI

The inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Penny Martin
Headteacher	Mr S Higginson
Date of previous school inspection	June 2006
School address	St Helens Road Leigh WN7 3PQ
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. The inspectors visited 10 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents provided by the school, including records of pupils' progress. Inspectors analysed 64 returned parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The quality of provision and children's achievement within the Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception).
- Pupils' achievement and progress in Key Stage 2, including the consistency and quality of teaching and learning.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management in securing improvement.

Information about the school

Gilded Hollins is an average sized primary school serving a residential area of Leigh, in Wigan. Pupils, the large majority of whom are of White British heritage, come from a range of socio-economic family backgrounds that is broadly average overall. Few pupils are eligible for free school meals. A number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities but the proportion is below the average for primary schools and no pupil has a statement of special educational need.

The school has been awarded National Healthy School status and the Gold Award from the Lowton School Sports Partnership.

At the time of the inspection, the school was undergoing building work to create an extension to classrooms. Year 6 pupils were undertaking the national, end of Key Stage 2 tests and Years 3, 4 and 5 were also undertaking standardised tests in the core subjects.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It has several outstanding features which give it a distinctive character and quality of provision. The school has a wonderful ethos, the result of the exceptional care provided for the pupils by the headteacher and his staff and the impact this has on the personal development of the pupils, particularly their maturity and consideration for others. The school also provides a rich and interesting curriculum that is particularly strong in the arts and in sport, and all pupils have the opportunity to excel. They achieve well and those who have difficulty with learning or other aspects of their development make outstanding progress. The school enjoys the full support and confidence of its parents.

The ability and aptitude of pupils vary from one cohort to the next. Although all year groups achieve well, taking into account their starting points, the attainment of Year 6 pupils in 2007 and 2008 was not as high as in past years. The current Year 6 is on track to reach high standards, similar or better than those of the past. However, the school's main aim is to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils, to develop in them life-long interests in learning and achievement, and it does this outstandingly well.

The quality of teaching is good. It is not yet of a consistently high quality to ensure pupils' achievement as a whole is outstanding, but in parts, such as in the quality of relationships between teachers and pupils, and in the care with which teachers assess the work of pupils, it is very strong. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, as is their attitude to work. In the Reception class, where the quality of the provision for children to play is very important, the quality of the outdoor provision is inadequate, despite the best efforts of the staff to make the space stimulating for children.

The leadership and management of the school have many strengths. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and he has built a strong staff team with shared values. He knows the school very well. Partnerships with parents are excellent as are the school's partnerships with agencies, other schools and individuals, such as artists and writers. The governors provide satisfactory support and challenge for the school; they should provide more challenge for the professionals through a broader-based debate of its priorities.

The school has recently experienced changes to its teachers, including its senior staff. It is embarking on a revision of the curriculum better to reflect the development of pupils' skills, and revising how the curriculum is led and managed. Together with the new building and future plans, the school faces an exciting future.

It is well placed to do so with confidence, with a good capacity for sustained improvement, grounded in its strengths of leadership and management, the quality of its existing provision and its track record of continuous, successful development.

What does the school need to do to improve further

- Improve the outdoor provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Governors should provide more challenge to the school, based on a good understanding of the priorities for development.
- Move the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding through:
 - developing an understanding of what such teaching and learning might look like at the school
 - involving the pupils in plans to improve learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

It is the personal development of pupils that lifts the outcomes of the pupils to the highest level. Children settle very well into school routines in Reception and in all classes, really enjoy their work. Their behaviour is excellent – not just in class, but around the school and in assemblies. Pupils' attitudes to work and learning are excellent. They listen with great attention and respond to teachers' questions with sensible and mature consideration. Attendance is good, well over the national average. Pupils know all staff care for them, setting very good role models, and pupils respond very appropriately by respecting each other. Older pupils look after younger ones particularly well and they develop a strong sense of what is fair and right. The older pupils in Years 5 and 6 carry substantial responsibility; less so in the case of the younger ones, although they know their turn will come.

Pupils achieve well in lessons. They try hard and enjoy the varied work provided for them by their teachers. Work in books is of a good quality, writing, in particular, and pupils know their targets, including what they need to do next to improve. Standards at the end of each key stage, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, are above average for pupils of the ages of five, seven and eleven. As they enter school with broadly average levels of knowledge and understanding, this represents at least good progress. In some years, such as in 2006 at the end of Key Stage 1, and 2007 and 2008 at the end of Key Stage 2, test results dipped and attainment fell from what were generally high standards. This was directly attributable to differences in the ability and make-up of different cohorts. The 2008 cohort of 11-year-olds, for example, contained far more boys than usual, many with learning and more complex behavioural difficulties. Parents of this year group testify to the efforts the school made to meet their children's needs and considered that they had achieved very well in the circumstances.

Pupils with learning difficulties, including those who are vulnerable to underachievement for any reason, achieve exceptionally well. The school tracks each pupil's progress rigorously and identifies early when problems emerge. Staff work very effectively together to ensure each identified pupil receives differentiated work aimed exactly at their needs. Such pupils relish the extra attention they receive and

thrive on the extra work. Very often, such pupils catch up fully and reach the national expectations for their age.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	1
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	1
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality and range of the curriculum and the degree of the care, support and guidance provided by the staff are major contributors to the success of the school. The school has developed a unique curriculum over the years, strongly influenced by the performing and visual arts, and by involvement in a wide range of sports. Aspects of English, in particular, have benefited and pupils' achievement in writing and poetry is of a very high standard through contact with poets and writers, for example. Through the arts, sport and through the curriculum generally, each pupil is able to find something at which he or she excels, and the school celebrates their achievements with pride; for example, through full school assemblies. This work is tightly linked with the school's overarching aim of preparing pupils for a rich adult life, and developing an appreciation of what is fine and worthwhile. The staff, with several new members, are currently engaged in a review of the curriculum to provide pupils with a better knowledge and understanding of the skills they need to develop for the future. The school provides an extensive range of out-of-school visits and extra-curricular activities to engage the interest of pupils and to broaden the curriculum.

All pupils benefit from the exceptional level of personal attention and care provided by the headteacher and staff. However, this is best seen when pupils, for whatever reason, need extra help. The school is extremely effective at providing whatever is needed; through its own formidable resources or by calling on other services and professionals as required. Links with parents are strong, and they are fully involved in the actions taken to enable pupils to get back on course.

Teaching is of good quality. Teachers plan interesting lessons and mark work thoroughly. They are ably assisted in lessons by teaching assistants who have very good knowledge of the pupils and who play a vital role with pupils who have learning

¹The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

difficulties. Relationships are excellent. Classes are full of involved and happy pupils. The recent changes in staffing provide an appropriate opportunity for the school to re-examine its approach to teaching and learning. The school's self-evaluation tells it that most teaching is good. It should now consider what is needed to raise its quality even further, to raise pupils' achievement to outstanding. To assist them, staff should build more on the feedback they receive from the pupils, who have remarkable maturity for their age.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership provided by the headteacher is central to the school's success. He takes an active part in teaching and provides the inspiration for the direction in which the school continues to develop. For example, through story, he challenges pupils' feelings, such as about what is fair and right, and encourages their choice to reject unfairness and discrimination. He has built a team of teachers, support staff and senior managers who share his values, which makes the school a very cohesive entity. The headteacher receives good support from his deputy headteacher, who is not class-based, and who provides good leadership and management for pupils with learning difficulties, and who oversees the tracking of pupils' progress, which is rigorous and for which teachers are held to account. Governors possess a wide range of skills and experience and are enthusiastic advocates for the school. They work effectively in committees but do not, as yet, sufficiently debate the future development of the school as a full governing body in order to provide appropriate challenge for the school's leadership.

The leadership of the school ensures all procedures relating to safeguarding pupils are in place and ensures their health and safety through high quality care and a rigorous analysis of risk. Leaders and staff work closely in partnership with parents and have established very effective links with neighbouring schools and with services for children in the local authority. Leaders ensure the pupils make a significant contribution to the wider local and global community through its teaching of respect for all people and its active promotion of charity and aid work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1

The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Nearly all children entering the Reception class have experienced pre-school education. Overall, they enter school with levels of skill and knowledge that are broadly typical of children of this age. Under the caring and nurturing ethos within the class, children settle quickly and become confident learners. They get on well with each other, form friendships and develop their social skills. The quality of provision within the class is good and is responsible for children's good progress. Children's more formal learning is well planned and purposeful and the children have appropriate opportunities to follow their interests in self-chosen activities, which they do with enthusiasm. The arrangements for children to play and learn by being outside in the fresh air are very limited. The outside space available for children to play outside the classroom is inadequate in its extent and quality, and falls far short of the demands of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. This reduces the overall quality of provision to satisfactory. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed by the Reception teacher, who manages resources well, assesses children's progress thoroughly and who has a good relationship with parents. Teaching support is effective, although with up to 30 children in the class, learning is most effective when extra help is available. For example, additional support had a significant positive impact in the quality of learning in the role-play area.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The questionnaires returned by parents were very positive. Where comments were included, these matched to a very large extent the strengths of the school evident to inspectors. In particular, the positive influence of the headteacher, the commitment of staff to the pupils, especially those who have learning difficulties, and the wonderful ethos of the school, received frequent praise. There were no concerns of any magnitude that reflected on the work of the school and none recorded with any degree of consistency.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gilded Hollins Community School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we ask them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 64 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 186 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	11	0	0

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.

15 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gilded Hollins Community School, Leigh, WN7 3PQ

You may remember that Mr Jones and I inspected your school recently. We spoke to a number of you about your work and what you felt about your school. Thank you to all of those who helped us, especially to the groups of children who gave up their time to talk to Mr Jones. We were made to feel very welcome. This letter is to share with you what we found out about the school.

The first thing to tell you is that we believe all of you are doing well at school, from the youngest children in Reception, to the Year 6 pupils, who were doing their national end of key stage tests (the SATs) during the inspection. All the signs are that the Year 6 pupils are going to reach very high standards this year. Even more important you are growing up into young people your parents can be proud of. Your care and consideration for each other and your enthusiasm for learning and for life are outstanding.

You are fortunate to go to a school like Gilded Hollins. It is a good school. It does some things outstandingly well. Your parents appreciate this. It has what we call a wonderful ethos. The school feels like a big family. Your headteacher, Mr Higginson, and all his staff know each one of you as an individual and they make sure that everyone has the opportunity to excel and have their skills recognised. If you are having problems with your school work or in any other way, then Gilded Hollins comes into its own. It would be difficult to imagine a school that tries harder to help children experiencing difficulties.

Your school is special in other ways too. The work you do is especially interesting and exciting. There are many visits out of school to make your work in school all the more meaningful. The opportunities the school provides for you to learn about writing, poetry, drama and history, and to take part in sports, are quite exceptional. No wonder you enjoy school!

All schools change and Gilded Hollins is no different. You have new teachers, for example, and people are talking about the future of education in your area that will probably affect your school. Mr Higginson is trying to make the school even better for you, as we believe he always has. We are sure the extension to the school will help. Through its staff, governors and its good reputation within the community, the school is well placed to protect and develop further what it already does well. It is very hard to think of how a school that does most things very well can improve

further. We have suggested a small number of things we think will help. One priority is to provide the Reception children with a proper outdoor area for them to learn in. We have asked the governors to work even more effectively together and the staff to consider how they can make your lessons and your learning the very best they could be.

We think with your maturity as young people, you will be able to help the staff and governors to achieve these things. But for now, please celebrate what you have already achieved.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett
Her Majesty's Inspector

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