

Golden Valley Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109108
Local Authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	324900
Inspection date	13 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	413
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	Ian Merryweather
Headteacher	Kevin Lynch
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Nailsea Park Nailsea Bristol BS48 1BB
Telephone number	01275 853077
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- The impact of actions being taken to improve provision and standards, particularly in English, and to raise standards for boys in Key Stage 1.
- How effective the contribution of the restructured senior leadership team is in raising standards across the school.
- The impact of the critical skills programme on the all-round development of the pupils.

Evidence was gathered from examination of the school's documentation, parents' questionnaires and pupils' work, observations of pupils in classes, around the school and in the playground, as well as interviews with subject leaders, pupils, governors and parents.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, are not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school is situated on the outskirts of Nailsea. Nearly all the pupils attending are of White British extraction and none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has risen slightly since the last inspection and is now broadly average. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are catered for in two Reception classes. The school has achieved several awards including Healthy School, Active Mark, Investors in People and the Financial Management Standard in Schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Golden Valley is a good school. It provides a good education for its pupils in an interesting and stimulating learning environment. The school's vision statement, 'Learning for Life, Achievement for All' underpins the whole ethos and ensures the curriculum followed is comprehensive, exciting and motivating. This includes the critical skills programme, which the whole school, pupils, staff, governors and parents have embraced with enthusiasm. The challenges set, and the way in which pupils tackle them, illustrate how pupils are developing skills of teamwork, leadership, perseverance and tolerance. As one pupil said, 'As group leader you have to encourage others in the team to do things they may not want to; it's quite hard but you find ways of doing it.' In addition, the pupils are discovering how useful these life skills are in all the other areas of their learning.

Parents are delighted with the school. A very high percentage returned the inspection questionnaires and almost all were fully supportive. They say they are well informed about events and most echo the sentiments of one who wrote, 'Golden Valley provides a very happy, safe and well balanced environment for our children. All their educational and emotional needs are catered for in a professional and personal way.'

Children in the Reception classes receive a good start to their education because teachers match activities well to their needs in an exciting learning atmosphere. When they enter Year 1 they are reaching standards that are above average. Standards in Key Stage 1 have consistently been well above average for the last few years. However, boys have not always performed as well as girls. The school has introduced themes into the curriculum which appeal to boys, and teachers strive to use texts and tasks that will enthuse boys without demotivating the girls. Topics such as 'The Good the Bad and the Ugly', based around animals, have had an instant and positive impact. The school's monitoring and tracking shows that boys are closing the gap in crucial areas, illustrating the success of the school's actions. Standards at the end of Year 6 have been slowly declining since the last inspection. Having reviewed the quality of teaching and learning the school took the major step of totally redesigning its curriculum. Last year was the first full year of its implementation and the impact was not immediately noticeable. However, this year the school's hard work is bearing fruit. Standards have risen significantly, particularly in English. This is confirmed not only by the school's own tracking, but also in the quality of work in the pupils' books and around the school. Although the current Year 6 group attained broadly average standards at the end of Key Stage 1, they are now performing at above average levels in English, mathematics and science.

The curriculum is stimulating and vibrant, as is the critical skills programme, and the main themes are relevant and interesting to the pupils. These have been consistently reviewed from their implementation to ensure that they work effectively. When one theme is found to work less well, as has happened, it is adapted and amended to try to ensure it will the next time round. Lively and exciting displays of pupils' work bring the school to life and are evidence of the way in which pupils' achievements are valued and celebrated. An excellent programme for the personal, social and health education of the pupils contributes effectively to their outstanding personal development.

It is evident from the excellent behaviour and enthusiastic responses in class that pupils greatly enjoy their education. They happily confirm this, saying that teachers go out of their way to make learning interesting and fun. The school lays a great emphasis on pupils being fully

involved in their own learning. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn. Resources such as interactive whiteboards are used skilfully by teachers and pupils alike. Classroom management and organisation are strong and teachers plan a good range of activities that enable all pupils to be purposefully employed even when not directly supervised. Teachers use questions effectively to probe pupils' understanding and extend their thinking, and pupils respond to these thoughtfully. However, there are occasions when teachers talk for too long and the pace of learning falls slightly. This can lead to pupils having insufficient time to complete their tasks in one session. Marking and assessment are strong. Teachers mark work very carefully and pupils say that it always tells them what they need to do to improve. One said, 'My teacher wrote, "try to remember to use commas more often or the person reading your work will suffocate before they get to the end of your sentence".' He went on 'I always remember to use commas now'.

The pupils are extremely well nurtured and the care and concern that are provided for them on a day-to-day basis are outstanding. The 'full value contract' which is negotiated by each class illustrates the exceptionally high expectations of behaviour, which are largely fulfilled. Pupils' personal and academic development is very carefully monitored from the time they enter the school. Targets set are challenging and regularly reviewed and pupils are fully involved in the setting of these. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe and are confident that there is always someone they can talk to about problems. All procedures for safeguarding pupils and child protection are securely in place. Many parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities commented on the very good support that their children receive from the school and the helpfulness and approachability of staff in sorting out any problems or concerns.

Pupils learn and play together in a harmonious atmosphere. They are thoughtful and responsive in class, and reflect maturely on their learning and the experiences they have. They knowledgeably discuss the meaning of a healthy lifestyle, thoughtfully pointing out the need for a healthy mind as well as a healthy body. The school and eco-councillors are very active, take their roles very seriously, and have a mature outlook in considering how they can make things better for the school and its pupils. They have a good understanding of different faiths and cultures and draw well on the experiences of their peers when exploring these. Pupils' academic attainment, as well as the excellent skills they develop through the dynamic curriculum, ensure they have an excellent grounding for the next stage of their education and later life.

The headteacher provides strong, dynamic leadership. As one parent said, 'He has a passion and drive to make Golden Valley what it is; this shows through his and his staff's dedication.' The clear vision for the direction of the school is shared by staff and governors alike. The senior leadership team is highly effective and works well as a cohesive unit. Management responsibilities have been distributed widely and all leaders and managers make a good contribution to school development. Teachers share good practice and are mutually supportive. Staff and governors know how well the school is doing, and their self-evaluation is generally accurate. There is a clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve further and challenging targets have been set. There is a good capacity to bring about these improvements as demonstrated by the significant rise in standards. The governors provide good support and challenge and are fully involved in the strategic development of the school. Their contribution to community cohesion is good. The school plays a significant role in the local community and has established useful links, for example with a school in Bristol, which will broaden the pupils understanding of different faiths and cultures in the wider community.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children join the Reception class with the skills typically expected for their age. Children make good progress and reach above average standards by the time they join Year 1. Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent, and the sensitive encouragement and guidance they receive helps them to become happy and, for the most part, independent learners. However, occasionally some adults give too much direction to the children which can inhibit this independence. Children behave exceptionally well and learn to play with and help each other. Teaching is lively and stimulating and generally enables the children to learn effectively. The curriculum is exciting and provides activities across all the areas of learning. There is a good balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. A range of activities is provided in the outside area but the learning environment here is not yet as stimulating and exciting as that inside. The school has good plans to extend the outside area to make it more interesting, safe and secure for the children. The care and attention given to children's welfare are excellent. The provision is led and managed well. Staff have a clear understanding of how well the provision meets children's needs and how it could be improved still further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide a more safe, secure and vibrant learning area outside for the children in the Reception class.
- Keep the pace of lessons brisk so that pupils have sufficient time to be able to complete their tasks.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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
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	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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	1
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**

14 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Golden Valley Primary School, Nailsea BS48 1BB

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so happily outside. The many of you who were kind enough to speak to us showed how proud you are of your school. You are right to be, because it is a good school!

What we found out about your school.

- You really enjoy school and make good progress to attain higher standards than those found in most schools.
- You behave really well, both in class and out in the playground.
- You get on exceptionally well with other pupils and always look after each other.
- You know a lot about how to stay safe and live healthy lives.
- The leaders are good at running the school and understand how they could make it even better.
- The excellent topics planned for you make learning very interesting, and you really relish the critical skills challenges you are presented with.
- Your teachers are doing a good job. They work hard to plan interesting lessons and always mark your work carefully.
- All staff at the school take outstanding care of you and keep you safe.
- The Reception classes give children a good start to school.

What we would like the school to do now.

- Make sure that a really safe, secure and exciting area is developed for the children in the Reception class.
- Ensure that you all have enough time to complete your tasks in lessons. You can help here by ensuring that teachers know when you have understood what it is you have to do.

Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine M Huard

Lead inspector