

Gladstone Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110757
Local Authority	City of Peterborough
Inspection number	325211
Inspection dates	19–20 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Michele Messaoudi

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)	416
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 David Jost
Headteacher	Mrs Christine Parker
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Gladstone Street Peterborough Cambridgeshire PE1 2BZ
Telephone number	01733 343908
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Gladstone Primary School is a larger-than-average sized school. The vast majority of pupils are of Pakistani heritage and are at various stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. Pupils' main difficulties are related to literacy, behaviour, social and emotional problems, and speech and language difficulties and disorders. The proportion of pupils with a statement of educational need is very high. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties, autistic spectrum disorders or specific medical needs. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The school was awarded the Healthy School Award in March 2008. It also holds Investors in People, Metlink International and Safety Challenge and School Travel Plan awards. The current headteacher has been in post for six months. The building is undergoing extension work to provide more teaching and administration space.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Gladstone Primary School is a satisfactory school with some good features. Since the last inspection, it has gone through a period of significant turbulence in relation to staffing that has affected its performance. Nevertheless, changes made in the last twelve months have brought about much needed improvement. In particular, the new approach to leadership and management is effectively moving the school forward and much has been gained from the creation of an assistant headship post. The senior leaders bring noticeable expertise, commitment and energy to their roles. They have quickly set up systems to monitor pupils' progress more rigorously, and their evaluation of the school's performance is increasingly accurate. They have rightly focused on raising standards of literacy and numeracy as a key priority. However, the improvements are not yet reflected in the national test results. The plans in place to further strengthen the leadership and management are entirely appropriate. Emerging strengths in leadership and management contribute to the school's satisfactory capacity to improve.

Pupils achieve satisfactorily from a very low baseline. Most teaching is better in literacy and numeracy lessons. Staff use their knowledge of teaching English as an additional language most effectively, enabling pupils to make better progress in these subjects than they have in the past. However, lesson planning does not sufficiently focus on raising pupils' standards of literacy in all subjects. Consequently, pupils cannot progress at the rate of which they are capable, and the more able pupils do not reach the higher levels in Key Stage 1, and very few do so in Key Stage 2. Inconsistency in the quality of marking and in the involvement of pupils in assessment means that pupils do not always understand exactly what they must do to improve. Practical learning in science, the use of information and communication technology (ICT) and good enrichment provision are strengths of an otherwise satisfactory curriculum and contribute much to pupils' enjoyment. Pupils who find learning difficult and those who are new to learning English receive good support and make at least satisfactory progress.

Most parents are positive about the school and respond well to the initiatives to involve them in their children's learning. For example, by attending reading workshops, parents of Reception children develop valuable skills to support their children more effectively. Personal development and well-being is a strength. Pupils' good attitudes to learning, enjoyment and good behaviour reflect their parents' aspirations for their future lives and the good care and support which the staff provide. However, attendance rates are low and a few pupils are persistently late for school. With good support from governors, the school has reviewed its attendance policy and is reducing the proportion of unauthorised absence. Pupils show a good understanding of how to keep safe and healthy. They contribute well to school and local life through the school council and by fulfilling various roles of responsibility. For example, some are involved in designing play space in the local community. Pupils gain first-hand experiences of religious, ethnic and cultural diversity through a number of successful initiatives. The inter-faith project that links five primary schools, and exchanges with rural schools in Rutland and Lincolnshire provides a good range of educational visits. These opportunities exemplify the school's good work to bring communities together. The school provides adequate value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Despite the fact that many children join the Reception classes with very little knowledge of English, most settle quickly into safe and secure routines because of the school's close

partnerships with parents. Children are treated as individuals, and staff are committed to their care and welfare. Skilled bilingual teachers and assistants give them good support when needed. Consequently, children gain confidence and many work well, independently and in groups. Good assessment systems provide teachers with a clear knowledge of children's individual needs and progress. Staff use this information well to support and encourage children's development towards the nationally expected goals. Good leadership and management, together with strong teamwork, ensure that staff focus on agreed priorities. Teaching is good and focused on achievement and inclusion. Consequently, most children, including those who find learning difficult, make good progress during their time in Reception, but standards remain well below those expected for this age group.

Children enjoy school and respond enthusiastically to the strong focus on developing communication and language skills. Most make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, sharing resources co-operatively and helping each other during activities. Resources are used imaginatively and effectively to support the good range of learning activities. The use of the outdoor space has improved since the last inspection to provide a wider range of experiences for children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement the plans to further strengthen the leadership and management in order to drive up standards.
- Ensure that teaching consistently challenges pupils, particularly the more able, and consistently shows pupils exactly how to improve their work.
- Ensure that the strategies aimed at raising the standards of literacy across the curriculum are firmly embedded in all lessons.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From exceptionally low starting points in Reception, particularly in English language, pupils achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 6. Standards have been significantly below average in national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in the last three years in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Key Stage 2, they have been significantly below average in English and in mathematics, albeit with some fluctuation in mathematics. They have been broadly average in science as a direct outcome of practical learning. Nevertheless, achievement during this period has been satisfactory for all pupils, including those who find learning difficult. Standards rose in both key stages in 2008 and evidence shows that they are on track to rise again in 2009 in both key stages. The use of drama lessons and a more systematic reading programme is beginning to have a positive impact on standards of literacy throughout the school. Inspection findings and assessment information collected by the school shows that the upward trend continues this year, with pupils on course to meet their targets in Year 2 and Year 6. Rates of progress in both key stages are improving. This includes pupils who find learning difficult, who receive good support from staff.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school and very much value being part of a caring community where they feel safe and secure. They behave well and display positive attitudes to lessons and wider school life. They make the most of everything on offer. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils have responded positively to links the school has made with two schools in different parts of the country. Assemblies, clubs and residential trips successfully develop pupils' self-esteem and self-reliance. Pupils understand the importance of eating healthily and being active. Their knowledge of keeping safe is particularly strong because it is an important part of the curriculum. Attendance is low, largely because a small number of families take holidays and extended leave in term time; visiting extended families in their country of origin. A few pupils are regularly late for school. The school council displays maturity in its work, giving pupils a voice that is valued by many in decision-making. Pupils make a good contribution to their school community by being reliable and friendly. Good links with the local community and charity fund-raising events develop pupils' awareness of the wider world and their sense of responsibility for others. Pupils gain satisfactory basic skills, such as reading and ICT, and gain good personal skills, which prepare them adequately for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are never less than satisfactory with evidence of some good teaching. Classrooms are orderly learning environments where pupils feel valued and secure. Good relationships enable lessons to run smoothly. The teaching manages pupils' behaviour well so that they have the opportunity to get on and learn. It ensures that pupils understand what they are learning and frequently refers back to the lesson objectives to check pupils' understanding. Questions are used skilfully to involve pupils orally in their learning. The teaching is good at motivating pupils to learn and take an interest in their work. The use of visits, visitors and different resources excite pupils and make school work meaningful to them. Teaching assistants complement the work of teachers. Because of their well-planned and targeted support, they make a valuable contribution to the progress of pupils who find learning difficult. Teachers routinely plan lessons at three levels of difficulty, which enable them to match pupils' needs closely. However, the planning does not pay enough attention to meeting pupils' varying linguistic needs, as well as to developing subject skills and knowledge, to accelerate their progress. Whilst most teaching effectively consolidates the English language development of pupils in literacy and numeracy, this does not happen sufficiently in other subjects. Some lessons lack visual prompts to support learners in their oral work and in making the links they need between listening and reading, and between reading and writing. Marking does not always reflect the targets pupils have been set. Consequently, at times, pupils are not sure how well they are progressing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A well-organised personal, social and health education programme ensures that pupils develop a good sense of responsibility and important skills such as what to do in an emergency. Pupil's development of independent working skills is satisfactory. Literacy and numeracy are taught

consistently. Initiatives to rectify weaknesses in areas such as reading are improving standards. Writing standards do not show the same degree of improvement. Teachers have rightly identified the need to increase opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills in all subjects, for example through drama, but this very important provision is not fully established in all classes. Pupils' success in science is the result of pupils investigating ideas for themselves and recording their findings in innovative ways. Teachers' and teaching assistants' expertise in enriching older pupils' learning experiences through, for example, a 'learning platform' in the ICT lessons, is a strength. Pupils can work on assignments and projects equally well at home and at school. These opportunities, alongside a wide range of clubs, add greatly to pupils' enjoyment. The school's inclusive approach positively supports pupils who find learning difficult.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Parents speak highly about the care and support which they and their children receive from the school. Staff place a strong emphasis on identifying and nurturing the social and emotional needs of individual pupils. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Consequently, pupils feel safe and happy, have trust in the adults and confidently turn to them when problems occur. This enables the school to deal with concerns swiftly, resulting in only rare instances of bullying and no exclusions in the past three years. Pupils who find learning difficult and those who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language receive appropriate guidance and help. This is provided by the school's good links with outside support agencies and good partnerships with parents, coupled with the expertise of the school's support staff. Academic guidance is no better than satisfactory as marking is inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The senior leadership sets challenging targets to drive up standards with improved precision. However, not all senior leaders use assessment information with the same rigour to monitor pupils' progress. Subject leaders have good expertise in their areas and a good understanding of how to improve standards in their subjects. The leadership at all levels monitors the quality of teaching satisfactorily. The school recognises that it has not fully established the strategies aimed at raising the standards of literacy across subjects or the use of assessment to raise attainment and accelerate progress. The school has a good understanding of the community and promotes community cohesion well, ensuring that pupils gain first-hand understanding of how diverse communities can live together in harmony. Governance is satisfactory. Governors show commitment and have identified that they need to challenge the leadership more consistently to improve pupils' learning.

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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?	3
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

23 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gladstone Primary School, Peterborough, PE1 2BZ

Thank you for making us so welcome, and a special thanks to the children who gave up part of their lunch break to tell us about your school. We enjoyed watching you work and play, and talking to some of you. We found you very helpful, polite, well-behaved and keen to learn. It was pleasing to hear that many of you enjoy school and feel very safe and well cared for.

We found your school to be satisfactory with some good features. The school is good at helping you keep fit, healthy and safe and at providing a happy and calm learning environment. Staff look after you well and give good support and guidance to those of you who find learning difficult and those who are new to English language. The school works well with your parents and qualified adults from outside the school to meet your various needs.

We have talked to all your teachers about how they can help to improve your learning. Mrs Parker and the senior leaders have good plans to improve the school and we have asked them to implement these plans. We have asked the staff to make teaching better so that all of you, particularly those who find learning easy, can make faster progress and reach higher standards. We have also asked teachers to ensure that you have a clear picture of what you need to do to improve. All staff have been asked to provide you with more opportunities to develop your literacy skills in all subjects. Finally, we have asked the school to help everyone improve attendance so that you can spend more time learning in school.

The staff and governors want the school to improve. We know that you will want to play your part by continuing to behave well, participating in lessons, working hard and sharing responsibilities around the school.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Michele Messaoudi

Lead inspector