

Godalming Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125044
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	328272
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Cathie Munt HMI

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr R Galliver
Headteacher	Mr D E Andrew
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2005
School address	Hallam Road Meadow Godalming GU7 3HJ
Telephone number	01483 421597
Fax number	01483 419605

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

This popular school is consistently oversubscribed. It has achieved the 'Activemark' Award and the Healthy School Award and is working towards the BECTA Mark for information and communication technology. The proportion of pupils identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with national figures but the number of pupils with a statement of special educational need is slightly higher than in most schools. These pupils mainly have dyslexia or problems with speech and language communication but a small number have a physical disability, multi-sensory impairment, or are autistic. The percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal is much lower than is the case nationally. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Consequently, the proportion for which English is not their first language is low. Recent additions to the buildings have improved the entrance and the administrative office. Plans are in place to extend the teaching area.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Godalming Junior School provides a good education that develops confident and articulate pupils. One parent's comment captured this, stating that, 'The school encourages children to act as individuals and not be afraid to have their own views and interests.' Attainment, already high, has risen significantly in science in recent years. This is due to exceptionally effective teaching in Years 5 and 6 and because of the emphasis on activity-based lessons. All pupils progress well in their personal development because of effective care and support. Academic progress, satisfactory in the first two years, increases in Years 5 and 6 due to more focused marking that gives pupils a better idea of how to improve their work. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress due to exceptionally well-individualised programmes. Pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Pupils exhibit maturity and understanding in their dealings with each other. Excellent behaviour and attitudes contribute to the calm atmosphere, and help pupils take full advantage of the good teaching that they receive. Children trust the staff and feel safe in school. Their well-being is safeguarded appropriately. Pupils support their school enthusiastically in local tournaments and festivals and by discharging their responsibilities conscientiously, for example as librarians and 'buddies'. This aspect of community cohesion is good, but pupils' understanding of the diversity of British culture is weak.

Parents play a significant role in their children's education. Their tireless fundraising has supplied the pupils with a wide range of high quality playground and audio equipment. Most parents responded to the questionnaire and their views were overwhelmingly positive. There was much praise for all staff, from the accommodating caretaker and efficient office staff to the skilful teachers and assistants and the 'fantastic leadership'. Many recorded thanks for the school's 'incomparable' promotion of their children's well-being over the years. Parents particularly appreciated '...the strong support for children with special needs'. A few correctly identified the accelerated progress made by children in the final years.

The well-respected headteacher promotes a strong sense of teamwork, leading to high morale. Inspectors concur with the parent who wrote that this '...is a happy, caring, supportive school'. The school has worked diligently to address the issues noted in the last inspection. The achievement of lower-attaining pupils now matches that of their peers. Leadership and management have improved and are judged good overall. Much has been achieved and the school's self-evaluation shows that everyone, rightly, is aware that there are further areas for development. Assessment practices are more robust than before. However, inconsistencies remain in the tracking of pupils' progress over time. Although teachers now regularly monitor the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility, the scope of subject managers' roles is not clear enough. Nevertheless, maintaining high standards over time and improving the rate of progress, while considerably enhancing the school environment, provides convincing evidence of the school's good capacity to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of assessment to track progress and support pupils' learning more consistently.
- Ensure that marking, particularly in lower school classes, indicates clearly to pupils the next steps that they need to take in order to improve their learning.
- Develop provision for community cohesion.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in English and mathematics and are particularly high in science. This is due to very effective teaching in Years 5 and 6. Able pupils, supported well by the good questioning and practical activities seen in some lessons, reach particularly high standards. Since the last inspection, progress has improved and it is now good in Years 5 and 6, where the pace of learning accelerates and pupils meet, and sometimes exceed, the high targets set for them. It is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4 where, generally, there is not such a demanding pace in lessons. Consequently, not all pupils are challenged as much as they might be. In all year groups, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress due to exceptionally well-targeted support from all adults within the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. Pupils show maturity and consideration in their dealings with others. Relationships with adults and peers are exceedingly harmonious and pupils' attitudes reflect the school's values well. Behaviour is excellent and this contributes to the calm and welcoming ethos in the school, and to the good progress in lessons. Attendance is very high. This demonstrates parents' commitment to their children's education and shows how much the youngsters enjoy school. They say that they feel safe and that the school looks after them well. A great many parents echoed this sentiment in writing and by phone. Pupils show a keen sense of fairness and make a good contribution to the school and the local community through activities such as the harvest breakfast and the Mayor's Carol Concert. Their understanding of Great Britain as a diverse society is less well developed and is weak.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers and other adults have an excellent relationship with the pupils. Lessons are generally well planned, showing a clear understanding of what staff want pupils to learn. Good questioning, in lessons such as science and French, ensures that pupils are fully engaged in their own learning. In some subjects, assessment is used well to support learning and accelerate the rate of progress, but this good practice is not being used consistently across the whole school. Where marking is good - and this is predominantly in upper school classes - it provides clear guidance on how pupils can improve their work. However, there is considerable variation across the school and within subjects. Pupils are motivated and keen to learn. Their enjoyment of lessons is obvious from their positive attitudes. They pay close attention in class and they work hard because their teachers give them good encouragement and hold their interest. Classroom assistants provide a good level of support for staff and pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Continuity in planning ensures that curriculum provision is good and meets the needs of each year group. Consequently, the majority of pupils become articulate and confident learners who make good progress in developing basic skills. Within some lessons, there are insufficient

opportunities for pupils to engage actively in their learning. However, interesting and varied extra-curricular activities, such as the science club and day and residential trips, enrich the basic curriculum and are enjoyed greatly by a substantial number of pupils. Public speaking competitions provide opportunities for the most able to demonstrate their highly developed communication skills, while masterclasses at a local grammar school provide additional challenge. Access to a wide range of activities promotes equality of opportunity and ensures that pupils are not disadvantaged in comparison to other students in the area. Indeed, figures from the local School Sports Partnership show that last year this school took part in more sporting activities than neighbouring schools. Pupils take responsibilities, such as being librarians and 'buddies', seriously and execute their duties responsibly. This serves them well in preparing for their future roles in life.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care and support provided by the school are good. Pupils are happy and confident in approaching adults to solve any problems that might arise. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils are set challenging targets but the guidance that they receive varies in different year groups. Where academic guidance is good, pupils receive clear advice through marking and the discussion of targets on how to improve their work. This element is stronger in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4. Consequently, older pupils are better informed and this accounts for their more rapid progress. Procedures for safeguarding and health and safety are fully established and are robust. The commitment and teamwork of the whole staff have created a safe and happy place in which learning can take place and where parents feel supported. Attendance is outstanding because it is monitored regularly, and encouraged through effective links with external agencies and through home school letters.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher enjoys the loyalty, trust and support of the pupils, parents, staff and governors. Effective teamwork, central to the school's philosophy, makes for a school where adults and children are happy and contented and where, as a parent remarked, '...everyone matters'. Parents were particularly positive about the headteacher's influence on the school's ethos. They also praised highly the care and concern shown for their children by all of the staff. The school has maintained high academic standards while making considerable improvements to the grounds and buildings, addressing the issues from the last inspection, and increasing the amount of cooperation with other schools and providers. This indicates a good capacity to improve further.

Staff are more involved than at the time of the last inspection in managing subjects. They monitor work on a regular basis and suitable training has increased their skills and knowledge. They are enthusiastic and show a determination to continue to improve provision. Some subjects are led extremely well by managers with a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. However, this is not consistent. In some subjects, job descriptions do not provide clear enough guidance about who is responsible for collating different aspects of data and for driving curriculum change. The school is developing its provision for community cohesion but this is at a very early stage. The governors, under the astute guidance of the chair, discharge their

duties appropriately and show a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They provide increasingly knowledgeable support and a suitable level of challenge.

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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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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	3
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?	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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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 learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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	3
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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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**

19 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Godalming Junior School, Godalming, GU7 3HJ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. In particular, thank you to those of you who helped by sharing your views with us. We agree with you and your parents that Godalming Junior School has a lovely, caring atmosphere. You make an excellent contribution to how good it is with your wonderful attendance record and your super behaviour, particularly in the playground where you are very patient and share the equipment sensibly. Well done! You told us that you like school a lot but prefer practical lessons such as art, music, computer and swimming.

Here are the main things that we found out.

- You behave extremely well, are very polite and get on very well together. This makes the school feel calm and friendly and helps you to learn.
- You reach high standards in your work because you are taught well, by both teachers and teaching assistants.
- Those of you who find learning difficult get excellent help and this means that you do well in your learning.
- The school works very closely with your parents to help you achieve your best.
- In Years 5 and 6, you learn more quickly because you know exactly what you have to do to improve from the things you are told when your work is marked.
- You know how to stay healthy and you take part in a lot of sport.
- You feel safe and enjoy learning because you receive good care and support and have a wide range of additional activities.
- You support your school well and do it proud in lots of different tournaments.
- Your headteacher knows your school well. Your parents and the staff think very well of him. All of the adults, including the governors, help him to make the school run smoothly. They have really improved it in the last few years.

Even a good school can improve, and the adults are thinking about how to make yours even better. We think that they could use all of your test results even more than they do now, to see who is and who is not making fast enough progress. We also think that you could get more help, particularly in Years 3 and 4, to make sure that you know your targets and what to do to reach them. Finally, we have asked the school to make sure that you find out more about the different groups of people who live in Britain.

Keep up your good work.

Yours sincerely

Cathie Munt

Her Majesty's Inspector