

# The Gates Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	133926
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	328768
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jim Crouch

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	270
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr G Firth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs K Coiffait
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 March 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Bristle Hall Way Westhoughton Bolton BL5 3QA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01942 634734
<b>Fax number</b>	01942 634735

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 May 2009
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average sized school serves the community of Westhoughton. The vast majority of pupils are White British. A small number of pupils are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, as is the number with a statement of special educational need. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides for Nursery and Reception age children. Since the last inspection nearly half of the staff have changed, including the headteacher and most of the senior leadership team. These changes included a variety of interim teaching arrangements. The school holds the Activemark and Healthy School award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school with good features in pupils' personal development and the way that it promotes their care and well-being. In recent years it has experienced many staffing problems, which affected pupils' progress and contributed to a significant drop in standards at the end of Year 6. Recent appointments and improvements in the management structure have enabled the school to improve the quality of teaching and learning and raise standards, particularly at Key Stage 1. Pupils are now making better progress. However, because of the slower progress in previous years standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly average and overall achievement is satisfactory.

Parents value the school's good care and support. They say that the school is welcoming and that teachers are clearly dedicated to helping their children make progress. Teachers know their pupils well. As a result of warm and supportive relationships, the happy pupils thrive, feel secure and are keen to learn. They talk enthusiastically about why they enjoy school. They contribute well to the life of the school through, for example, the work of the school council and the peer mediators. Pupils feel safe and show a good awareness of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, choosing to eat healthy snacks at break and joining in the school's developing range of sporting activities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. School assemblies and circle time provide good opportunities for pupils to join together to celebrate their achievements and reflect on their relationships with others.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and improving. In the best lessons teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that all pupils are challenged and take an active part in the lesson, including in assessing their own progress. However, in some lessons some activities do not provide sufficient challenge for all learners and progress is not as good as it might be. The curriculum places an appropriate emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy. However, an emphasis on teaching through separate subjects means that pupils do not always appreciate the relevance of an activity, or its links to learning in other subjects, and opportunities to reinforce and extend previous learning are missed.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since taking up post in 2007, the headteacher has introduced a devolved approach to management. As a result other leaders and managers have developed the skills and abilities to bring about sustained improvement. However, this has yet to fully impact on pupils' progress. The school works well with parents and a wide range of partner organisations to promote pupils' well-being. The recent improvements in the school's management systems, and in particular the effective monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school, have been a significant factor in improving teaching and learning and in raising standards and achievement. The school has demonstrated good capacity to improve further. It has addressed issues raised in the last inspection. As a result, value for money is sound and improving.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory with some good features. Attainment on entry has generally been close to expected levels, although there has been a decline recently, mainly because children's literacy and language skills are less well developed. Progress has been generally satisfactory, although those currently in the Reception class are making better progress

from their lower starting points. As a result most children are working securely at the nationally expected levels by the end of Reception Year. Children are well cared for and happy to attend. They quickly develop positive attitudes and particularly enjoy role play, such as dressing up as rabbits. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities. However, given the recent increase in the number of children, the school does not always make the best possible use of the outdoor teaching space so that children can gain maximum benefit from the good variety of tasks that are provided. In addition, there is a need to develop more free movement between the indoor and outdoor spaces. The management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. A strong team spirit is being engendered and an improvement plan is being closely followed. Staff are becoming more confident in using data to monitor progress and inform planning and each child now has a key worker to collate evidence and produce a record of each child's learning journey.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve teaching and pupils' progress to at least a good level, so as to raise standards by the end of Year 6.
- Improve the links between subjects to better meet pupils' needs and improve progress.

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**

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. Pupils start Year 1 with skills and abilities that are close to those expected for their age. In recent years they have made satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1 to reach broadly average standards. However, because of improvements in teaching and learning, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are now making good progress and are on target to attain above average standards by the end of Year 2. Attainment at the end of Year 6 declined between 2004 and 2007 and the progress of some pupils, particularly in 2007, was inadequate. However, the results for the Key Stage 2 tests in 2008 and current school data indicate that, because of actions taken by the school, standards have improved and all pupils are making satisfactory or better progress. The school's very thorough tracking system means that all pupils are now set challenging targets. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the small number who are learning English as an additional language are well supported and make at least satisfactory progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are happy at school and relate well to each other and to staff. They participate enthusiastically in assemblies and they have gained a good understanding of other faiths and cultures through activities such as Diwali Day and a languages week. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good. As a result of the school's actions, attendance has improved and is now above average. Pupils show a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. They say that they know how to stay safe, particularly as a result of contributions from visitors such as the police and the 'crucial crew'. Pupils eagerly take on responsibilities such as buddies, peer mediators and as members of the job squad. The elected school council members say they have been influential in the introduction of healthy snacks, the 'Gates Book of Records' and the

'gotchas', photographic records of positive contributions made by pupils. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community, for example, by performing at the Music in the Park event and at local residential care homes. They exchange work and information about themselves with pupils in a French school and are actively involved in fundraising and charity work. They are making satisfactory progress towards their future economic well-being through opportunities to work in teams and evaluate each other's work.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and improving. An increasing number of lessons are good or better, but this has not yet led to all groups of pupils making consistently good progress. Teachers have good relationships with pupils. They make good use of praise and rewards. As a result pupils are keen to contribute to lessons because they know their ideas will be valued. In the better lessons, teachers use a good range of strategies to engage and motivate all groups of pupils and make good use of technology such as interactive whiteboards to bring lessons to life. Computers are used to good effect to support teaching in mathematics and English and for independent research. In the weaker lessons learning is less well managed. There is sometimes a lack of pace and some activities, while enjoyable, are not always well matched to learning outcomes. Opportunities to really challenge all groups of learners are sometimes missed and, as a result, progress is not as good as it might be. Teaching assistants usually contribute well. They provide effective support in class and are skilled in working with individuals to raise levels of literacy and numeracy. However, sometimes, particularly during teacher-led activities, they do not contribute as well as they might.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum provides pupils with a satisfactory range of activities to promote learning. It meets the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and steps are being taken to extend and enrich the provision for the more able pupils. However, the tendency to teach through discreet subjects means that pupils are less aware of the links between areas of learning and opportunities to teach through contexts that are relevant to pupils, and to reinforce and extend skills in literacy and numeracy, are missed. A good programme of social and emotional development successfully promotes pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education. The curriculum is enriched through the teaching of French at Key Stage 2 and by themed events such as Deaf Awareness Week. A good number of educational visits and visitors and a growing number of extra-curricular activities, including several sporting and musical activities, such as the steel band, extend learning and increase enjoyment.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils benefit well from the good care, guidance and support that the school provides. They feel safe and secure and say that adults are caring and kind. Parents say the staff are approachable and supportive. Child protection and safeguarding procedures are in place and meet current government requirements. Strong links with a large number of external agencies enhance the good provision for vulnerable pupils, those with learning difficulties and/or

disabilities and the few pupils who are learning English as an additional language. Pupils who join the school other than at the usual time say they settle in very quickly because of the good arrangements made by the school. Assessment information is used well to provide additional support and to set challenging targets which are shared with pupils. Pupils are generally well informed of the progress they are making and how they can improve. This enables them to make better progress.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is a shared vision for the school and all interested parties are given good opportunities to contribute to its implementation. All staff contribute to self-evaluation. School leaders have used this process well to establish the strengths of the school and its areas for improvement. The resulting improvement plan is sharply focused on addressing the key areas for improvement and in some cases, such as improving attendance and links with parents, the school is able to demonstrate a positive impact on the school's effectiveness. However, other priorities, such as the curriculum, are ongoing and have yet to lead to pupils making consistently good progress. A well managed programme of performance management and staff development means that staff are growing in confidence and increasing their ability to take on responsibilities. This is an inclusive school. Its good commitment to equality is evident in its vision statement, the positive attitudes of staff and pupils and the very few incidents of bullying, or racism. Its contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has taken action to increase parents' involvement in the life of the school and it has good links with the local community. However, it is in the early stages of establishing direct links with other communities at a national and international scale. Governance is satisfactory. Governors play an active role in supporting the school and its pupils. The recently increased level of interaction with the school's leadership and closer contacts with teachers and pupils mean that the governors are now better able to monitor and challenge the work of the school and to contribute to school improvement.

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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	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
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?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
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

<sup>1</sup>Grade 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

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	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	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**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so polite and friendly. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing all of the things you like about your school.

We were particularly impressed by your good behaviour and your keenness to do well in lessons. You show good awareness of the needs of others through your charity work and the way in which you all welcome pupils new to the school. We found that the staff take good care of you and keep you well informed of the progress you are making. They have worked hard to help you enjoy your education by developing a good range of visits and extra activities in sport and music.

We found that your school gives you a satisfactory education and that you reach average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. You are all making at least satisfactory progress in learning and those of you in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress.

There are two important things that could be better. We have asked your school to continue to improve teaching, so that you make better progress and reach higher standards by the end of Year 6, and to improve the links between subjects in the curriculum so that you can make better progress and enjoy learning even more than you do now.

Of course, you also have an important part to play in helping your school to carry on improving. You can do this by continuing to be as positive about learning as you are now and by trying to improve all aspects of your work.

Thank you again for making us feel so welcome.