

Galley Hill Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135224
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	334461
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Joy Richardson

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	312
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 Ben Robins
Headteacher	Mrs Jackie Lambert
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Galley Hill Hemel Hempstead Hertfordshire HP1 3JY

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	30 April –1 May 2009
Inspection number	334461

Telephone number
Fax number

01442 406000
01442 406001

Age group	3-11
Inspection dates	30 April -1 May 2009
Inspection number	334461

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Galley Hill opened in September 2008 as a new school after the closure of two local primary schools. It occupies the former building of one of these schools, which has been partly refurbished for the purpose. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage part time when they are three. They start full time in Reception in September after their fourth birthday. The percentage of children with statements of special educational need, or with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is above the national average. Around 90% of pupils are White British and 10% come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. Thirteen pupils are at an early stage in learning English as an additional language. Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are less well developed than usual at this age, though the range is wide.

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, which confirms the school's view of itself. The school is moving forward in forging its own identity. It provides a calm and orderly environment for learning. The new staff team has a common sense of purpose, with a clear focus on helping pupils to achieve their best.

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and activities are well organised to extend their learning in all areas. Pupils' work shows standards in Year 2 that are broadly in line with those expected nationally, and standards in Year 6 that fall slightly short of this expectation. The school has set up systems to monitor, each term, the progress made by pupils from their individual starting points. Information from assessment shows that pupils are making satisfactory progress throughout the school. However, the school recognises that some pupils could be challenged further. It is beginning to identify where progress could be faster, and to set challenging targets to raise achievement.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory; they are polite, friendly and articulate. The school has set clear expectations of behaviour and most pupils behave well, though the behaviour of a few sometimes troubles others. Pupils understand the rewards and sanctions that result from their actions and are quick to note any unfairness. The school recognises the need to ensure consistency in the management of pupils' behaviour, and to help pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour. Pupils have a growing awareness of how they can contribute to the school community. Members of the school council take their role seriously. Pupils are keen to take on jobs around the school, and they do them well.

Teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are planned thoroughly and make clear what pupils need to learn. In the best lessons, there is a strong spirit of shared endeavour. Pupils become actively involved, for example questioning pupils in the 'hot seat' about the person they represent, or sharing their ideas with a 'talking partner'. In some lessons, teaching does not challenge pupils enough or spark their curiosity in enquiring further.

The school reaches out to parents in many ways, intent on building a partnership of respect and trust in support of children's learning. For example, parents greatly appreciated the recent open morning when they were able to join their child's class for a lesson. Much information is provided for parents, although the home/school reading record is not used to full effect by staff and parents for two-way communication about reading. The school is highly supportive of pupils with particular needs or whose families are under stress.

The headteacher, with satisfactory support from governors and the leadership team, is working with steady purpose to establish the school and improve the quality of education provided. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has a realistic view of what has been achieved to date and of what remains to be done in order to ensure consistently effective practice. Consequently it has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage because the provision is well organised and managed. Activities are well planned to build learning step by step and to foster children's personal development. Staff carefully assess the progress made by each child, identifying any gaps in learning. As a result, children make good progress and are on course

to reach the goals set nationally for this stage, in all the areas of learning. Children learn with enthusiasm about letters and the sounds they make, and use this knowledge confidently, for example, in writing their own 'books'. Children know the routines and are sociable and cooperative, for instance in sharing resources and tidying up. They learn about being healthy and keeping safe, and greatly enjoy activities such as helping to prepare fruit for snack time. Adults guide children's learning skilfully, within small teaching groups and in the course of activities that children choose for themselves. The staff know children well, working with all the children across the setting. However, although each child has a 'key worker', the arrangement does not consistently provide, for children and parents, a close and continuing relationship with one person. Space and resources are used to good effect, in and out of doors. Children are independent in choosing activities and they become absorbed in the task in hand, often weaving imaginative ideas into their play.

What the school should do to improve further

- Pursue higher achievement by extending the challenge for pupils in lessons and through the setting of targets
- Develop consistently good teaching and learning by identifying and sharing good practice and pinpointing actions needed to raise standards
- Ensure consistency across the school in promoting good behaviour, and further develop pupils' sense of responsibility for their own behaviour
- Strengthen the partnership with parents by providing continuity of relationships in the early years, and encouraging two-way communication about reading

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

The school tracks the progress of individual pupils and has established a baseline from which to measure their progress over time. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are making satisfactory progress and standards in Year 2 are broadly in line with those found nationally in reading and in mathematics. In writing, most pupils are reaching the level expected, but few are achieving beyond this. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Standards in the work of pupils in Year 6 are broadly in line with national expectations, in English, mathematics and science, but fall short in some cases. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in building on their prior learning. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress in line with their peers.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils are keen to succeed and they have positive attitudes to work. Behaviour is satisfactory. Pupils are generally attentive and well-focused on their learning, though a few distract others on occasion. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Assemblies and the curriculum develop some understanding of the wider world, and of the diversity of people's beliefs, customs and traditions. Pupils are confident and self-assured in articulating their own views. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They are encouraged to eat healthily and they have many opportunities for exercise, taking

advantage of the extensive school grounds. Pupils show a satisfactory awareness of how to keep safe, as when pupils reminded each other about washing hands. Pupils make some contribution to the community, for example in fundraising for charities, and looking after younger pupils. The school council is beginning to develop its role in helping to make the school better for everyone. Pupils develop satisfactory skills in literacy and numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) to prepare them for later life. Most pupils enjoy school and attendance is broadly average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teaching is good in some lessons and occasionally outstanding, but expectations are not consistently high. Teaching is carefully planned so that the required curriculum is covered and pupils know what they are intended to learn. Relationships between staff and pupils are good, and many pupils speak warmly of their teachers. Teachers make good use of resources such as interactive whiteboards to make learning clear. They often employ a variety of teaching approaches to engage pupils actively, such as asking them to discuss ideas in pairs. Pupils generally concentrate well, and they enjoy working things out, for example in mathematics. However, some lessons lack pace and pupils lose attention because they are not challenged enough to extend their thinking. Teaching does not always take account of what pupils can already do, or where they need to improve. Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils' learning, working closely with teachers. Homework is well organised and purposeful in most classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school is developing a curriculum that offers a stimulating variety of activities within topics that help build skills across a range of subjects. The school is continuing to refine its planning to ensure that pupils do not repeat work and that skills are developed at an appropriate level. The school gives suitable emphasis to literacy and numeracy. Pupils are grouped according to their different levels of attainment for work in phonics, and also in mathematics, so work is adapted to different needs. The school makes good provision for the use of ICT by staff in their teaching and by pupils in their learning. Pupils enjoy a satisfactory range of clubs, and the school is extending its use of visits and visitors to enrich the curriculum. The school makes every effort through its deployment of staff to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities can access the whole curriculum. Personal, social and health education is carefully planned to support pupils' development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

This is an inclusive school that does much to support vulnerable pupils and those with particular needs. Pupils feel that they can turn to adults for help, and that issues such as bullying will be taken seriously and usually resolved. However, pupils feel that the responses of staff are not always effectual in dealing with poor behaviour. The school works hard to secure regular attendance and reduce persistent absence. It works effectively with the Children's Centre on the school site in order to provide advice and support for families in the community. The school

takes the necessary steps to safeguard children and to check the suitability of staff. The school helps pupils to look after themselves and others, teaching them about issues of health and safety and care for the environment. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school has begun to set targets to guide pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy, though these are not yet being consistently applied. Marking is sometimes very helpful, but there is variation in how far pupils are challenged to improve and encouraged to evaluate their own learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The major challenge for the school's leadership and management has been establishing confidence and trust in the new school, and setting clear expectations for staff and pupils. The headteacher has brought a calm sense of purpose and direction, harnessing the efforts of the staff team in working together to achieve the best for pupils. The school's leadership ensures that equality of opportunity for all is good. The school monitors pupils' progress to identify weaknesses, for example in writing, in order to raise standards. It is developing processes of self-evaluation and is beginning to involve governors, staff and parents in taking stock of what is working well and what could be better. The school recognises the need to broaden leadership in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and planning the development of subjects. The school is making a satisfactory contribution to the local community and to pupils' understanding of the wider world. The new governing body supports the school and its leadership, and is developing satisfactory processes for overseeing the quality of provision.

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
---	----------------

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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
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?	3
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	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

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

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	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

5 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Galley Hill Primary School and Nursery, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 3JY

We enjoyed meeting you when we visited your school. We were interested to see your work, and to hear your views. We thought that you were friendly, polite and thoughtful, and you explained your ideas well.

We think that you have settled down together in your new school and you get on well with the staff. You usually concentrate well in lessons, and most of you are reaching the standards expected for your age. The youngest children make a good start in the Foundation Unit.

We enjoyed hearing about some of the special times you have had, like taking part in the 'Rock Challenge', and raising money for charity with your 'wacky hair' on Red Nose Day. The school council has good ideas, and you are sensible and responsible in doing jobs around the school to help other people.

The school gives you a satisfactory education. Mrs Lambert and all the staff are working hard to make it even better. We think that some of you could be set higher targets to work towards, and be challenged more in lessons. We would like the staff to share their good ideas about the best ways of helping you to learn and achieve all you can. The school wants to make sure that behaviour is dealt with fairly. You have a part to play by making sure you understand the rules, and helping everyone to keep to them. The staff want to work together with your parents to help you learn, and we think that the reading record books could help with this. We also think it would be good for the children in the Foundation Unit to have one particular adult they can always turn to.

Thank you again for welcoming us.

Yours sincerely

Joy Richardson

Lead inspector