

Gifford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101898
Local Authority	Ealing
Inspection number	335800
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Graham Lee

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	631
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phillip Young
Headteacher	Nigel Cook
Date of previous school inspection	4 September 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 24 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at school documents including the development plan and tracking information about pupils' progress. They also considered the views of pupils and staff and the 304 parental questionnaire responses. Inspectors also talked to some parents at the school gate.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- The reasons for considerable improvements in pupils' attainment and progress in 2009 and evidence that this will be maintained.
- The extent to which teachers are using assessment more effectively to challenge pupils and to help them improve their work.
- The effectiveness of the new governing body and leaders at all levels in driving improvements in the school.

Information about the school

This is a very large primary school that continues to grow. Pupils come from a very wide range of backgrounds, most prominently White British, Black African and Black Caribbean. Most pupils speak English as an additional language and many are at the early stages of learning the language, particularly when they join the school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average. Many of these have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural and emotional difficulties. Similarly, there are many more pupils with a statement of special educational needs than are found in most schools. Most of these are in the school's unit for deaf children which currently has 17 pupils on roll. Many more pupils join or leave during the year than is the case in most schools including some asylum seekers or refugees. At the inspection of September 2008 the school was found to be inadequate and given a notice to improve. Following interim arrangements, a new headteacher took up his post at the beginning of this term. There have also been substantial changes to the governing body, including a new chair.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Gifford has made rapid progress and now provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education. It has tackled its weaknesses with vigour and determination under the strong leadership of its headship team, supported and challenged by the new, but experienced, governing body. The strategies and initiatives implemented by the school's leadership have resulted in rapid and sustained improvement across the full range of the school's work. Rightly, leadership focused on pupils' progress and through a robust tracking system they quickly identified those groups who were underachieving. A wide range of effective support programmes were then put in place to accelerate their progress. At the same time, teachers were challenged and supported to expect more of their pupils. Consequently, teaching is much better and continues to improve. Pupils' attainment rose considerably at the end of Year 6 and progress improved markedly throughout the school. Current evidence indicates that this trajectory of improvement is continuing during this academic year. Staff have become re-energised and leaders at all levels are much more involved in raising achievement. Leaders and governors have a very clear view of what needs to be done to build on the recent successes. Their drive and commitment, together with the substantial, sustained advances made since the last inspection, show that the school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

Children get off to a good start in the warm and welcoming Nursery and Reception classes where they quickly become confident and eager learners. As they move through the school pupils' progress is accelerating because teachers are making much better use of the much improved assessment systems to tailor lessons to meet the needs of the wide range of abilities in their classes. They are also using target setting effectively to help pupils to improve. Most pupils know their targets and one commented, 'I like our colourful classroom and how our targets are where we can see them,' and another, 'When I achieve a goal I feel proud of myself.' Although teaching has improved markedly some inconsistencies remain. Sometimes activities are too easy for the most able pupils and they do not make as much progress as they should. Occasionally, teachers talk for too long and do not give pupils enough opportunities to discuss their ideas and to develop their speaking and listening skills. Teachers' marking is regular and helpful to pupils, although it does not always give them clear enough guidance on how to improve.

Rightly, the school's efforts have been concentrated successfully on accelerating pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. In the case of the latter, for example, a renewed focus on investigative science led to very large gains in attainment. Ambitious

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plans are in place to make the curriculum more creative and enjoyable for pupils. Currently, there are some good links between subjects, which helps pupils to see how the different parts of their learning fit together, but these are not systematic. For example, opportunities are missed for pupils to develop their writing skills in different contexts and to use information and communication technology to support their learning in other subjects. Pupils and parents told inspectors that they would like more clubs to develop their interests in sport, music and the arts. Whilst there are a number of clubs on offer, they are a little limited for such a large school.

At the heart of the school's work is a commitment to welcoming everybody who walks through the door. This is recognised by parents who are overwhelmingly supportive. One typical view expressed was, 'I have never had a problem that wasn't dealt with immediately and to my satisfaction.' Consequently, the school provides good care and support for its pupils, in particular those who are vulnerable. It works in close partnership with a range of agencies to meet their needs. Deaf pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school and those who are learning English or find learning more difficult are given good support which enables them to make similar progress to their friends. Consequently, pupils generally feel safe and have confidence in the adults around. They get on well together and there are good levels of racial harmony. A few expressed concerns about behaviour but inspectors found that pupils were polite and friendly and behaved well in classrooms and around the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that the vast majority is good or better by Autumn 2010 by:
 - ensuring that assessment information is used consistently to challenge more able pupils to achieve as well as they can
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to discuss their ideas and to develop their speaking and listening skills
 - ensuring that marking consistently helps pupils to improve their work.
- Make the curriculum more creative and enjoyable for pupils through:
 - developing more systematic links between subjects to help them to see the relevance of their learning
 - providing more opportunities for them to write in different contexts
 - ensuring that they use their information and communication technology skills to support their learning at every opportunity
 - providing more opportunities for them to take part in additional activities in sport, music and the arts.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In lessons pupils are generally keen to learn and apply themselves diligently. They

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respond well to the challenges presented. A number said that they like knowing where they are with their learning and responding to the challenge of 'moving up to the next level'. They enjoy discussing their ideas in groups and in pairs and cooperate well. In mathematics lessons in Year 4, for example, pupils of all abilities enjoyed estimating the length or circumference of their limbs and then measuring accurately to see if they were correct. They worked well together to respond to the various challenges that were presented, for example in discovering the relationship between the circumference of the wrist and neck.

A number of pupils still have weak skills in spoken English and their learning and progress slows when they do not have the chance to talk through their ideas with the teacher and one another. A few also become disengaged when they are required to sit for too long without active participation and more able pupils do not make as much progress from time to time when the work is too easy for them. Nevertheless, the school's focus on improving their progress is paying dividends. Pupils of all abilities made accelerated progress last year. Year 6 pupils made very good progress to reach levels that are broadly in line with the national picture. This represents a significant improvement on previous years and indicates that they are now satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education and the world beyond.

Pupils have a good understanding of the need to adopt healthy lifestyles and this permeates the life of the school from the healthy snacks pupils eat during the day, to their healthy choices at lunchtime and their appreciation of the importance of exercise. They know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations and feel well supported by adults. For example, one pupil commented, 'Teachers help you to deal with any problems you have with other people.' The school does have a few pupils who present challenging behaviour from time to time but these pupils are helped to control their emotions effectively, confirmed by one pupil who commented, 'My teacher helps me when I get angry.' Most pupils are proud of their school and enjoy taking on various responsibilities. They take their roles as school councillors, for example, very seriously and feel that their voice is listened to in securing changes around the school. Their contribution to the wider community, however, is more limited.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The good level of support given to various groups of vulnerable pupils is illustrative of the good support, care and guidance provided by the school. Those with emotional and behavioural difficulties are given good support through strategies such as 'the place to be' where, as one child put it, 'You can talk to a person about anything.' Provision for deaf pupils is provided through an appropriate balance of support provided in class and in small withdrawal groups. These pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school. Those with moderate learning difficulties are supported effectively in class by teaching assistants. As a result, all these groups of vulnerable pupils make as much progress as their peers.

An increasing proportion of teaching is now good or better. Teachers enjoy very good relationships with their classes and manage them well. They plan to meet the needs of the wide range of abilities well for the most part, although more able pupils are not always fully extended by the activities they are given. The curriculum is now robust in supporting pupils' basic skills and there is a wide range of catch-up and booster programmes in place to help most pupils to achieve as well as they can in mathematics and English. However, links between subjects are not well established and opportunities are sometimes missed to develop literacy and numeracy through other subjects. In particular, pupils are not doing as well in writing as they are in reading and do not have enough opportunities to write for different audiences and purposes. Teachers sometimes make good use of interactive technology in lessons, but opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their learning are not routinely identified in planning and some pupils do not use their skills enough.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The rapid improvements made across a broad range of work in the school have been led very effectively by the two acting headteachers supported by a consultant and the new governing body. They quickly identified what needed to be done to bring about the sustained improvement required and secured a common sense of purpose amongst staff to bring it about. As teachers have seen what has been achieved, morale and expectations have been raised. The momentum of improvement has gathered further pace under the new headteacher. Leaders understand that more needs to be done. This is evident in generally realistic self-evaluation and clear plans for improvement. The governing body is experienced and knowledgeable. The governors immediately took stock of the situation in January and have supported leaders in making the necessary changes. For example, they have reallocated the school's large surplus budget to identified priorities in the improvement plan.

The school has a very clear commitment to equal opportunities and its effectiveness is evident in its welcoming atmosphere and commitment to improving the attainment of all groups of pupils. As a result, attainment is rising and there are no groups who are underachieving significantly, although the more able are not always as well catered for as they might be. Everybody at the school takes the safeguarding of pupils very seriously and procedures are robust. The school makes a strong contribution to community cohesion within the local area and has developed an ambitious strategy to improve the national and global dimensions still further. The school is held in high regard by most parents but leaders are aware that more needs to be done to reach out to groups of parents who do not readily engage with the school. The recent appointment of a parent support adviser indicates the school's commitment to this work.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2

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The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's skills and understanding are often very low when children begin school, and many arrive speaking little or no English. The very good support for these children is a notable feature of provision in the Nursery and Reception classes. Staff speak a wide variety of languages and can often communicate with the children in their own language. This helps children to settle quickly and to feel confident in their surroundings. They really enjoy being at school and make good progress in the development of social skills as they learn to share, take turns, play together and to listen to one another and to the adults around them.

Children's welfare is a priority for all the adults. Staff work well together to provide a range of exciting opportunities for children to develop their skills in all areas of their learning. Every opportunity is taken to develop children's language skills in play situations and in the activities led by adults. Staff make use of the outside area to promote children's learning, but it is not as enticing or stimulating as the classrooms. Assessment is thorough but is not regular enough to capture all the short steps children make in their learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and this is evident in the improvement that has been made since the last inspection. Children make good progress as they move through the Nursery and Reception classes, although their attainment remains below average, particularly in communication, language and literacy, when they move into Year 1.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and the level of disagreement with any of the questions was very low. The few who said that their children were not safe gave no indications of the reasons. Relatively few parents made additional comments. Those that did tended to commend the approachability of staff in the school and the welcoming atmosphere. A few also spoke highly of the good start their children had made in the Nursery and Reception classes. The inspection evidence supports these positive remarks. Very few parents expressed any concerns. A few were worried about the low levels of attainment reached in the school and their children's slow progress. Inspection evidence indicates that these concerns may have been legitimate in the past, that attainment has risen considerably and the progress of all groups of pupils is accelerating rapidly. Other concerns related to a lack of homework and a lack of clarity about the school's policy. The headteacher is aware of this and has plans to deal with it shortly. Finally, a number of parents are concerned about the lack of clubs in school. Inspectors agree with this and have asked the school to provide more.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gifford Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 304 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 631 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	183	60	114	37	4	1	1	0
The school keeps my child safe	179	59	115	38	5	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	163	54	132	43	3	1	3	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	126	41	153	50	15	5	3	1
The teaching is good at this school	143	47	142	47	6	2	6	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	142	47	143	47	9	3	3	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	120	39	170	56	5	2	1	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	106	35	157	52	12	4	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	118	39	156	51	14	5	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	109	36	161	53	17	6	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	104	34	164	54	16	5	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	104	34	161	53	11	4	6	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	144	47	139	48	12	4	4	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gifford Primary School, Northolt UB5 6BU

You may remember that I visited your school recently with three other inspectors. We really enjoyed our time at Gifford and I am writing to thank you for being so friendly and helpful. I thought you would like to know what we found out.

Your school has been through a difficult time lately but it is improving quickly. It is now giving you all a satisfactory standard of education. Your teachers have worked hard to improve things for you and you told us how they make your learning interesting and fun. You also told us how your targets are helping you to improve. All of you are getting some good support with your learning including those of you who find things a bit more difficult.

We were impressed by your politeness and your keenness to learn. We thought you all got on very well together. You know how to stay healthy and keep yourselves safe. A few of you told us that you still have some worries about behaviour but we found this to be good during the inspection.

Your two deputy heads, with the help of all the staff, have made lots of improvements this year. This is now being continued with your new head. Together, they are keen to make the school even better for you. We have asked them to do a couple of things that we think might help.

- Firstly, we want your teachers to make sure that the work is always hard enough for those of you who find learning a bit easier. We also want them to make sure that you have lots of chances to talk about your work and to make sure that marking helps you to improve.
- Secondly, we want the school to make your learning even more exciting and to give you lots of chances to write about different things and to use computers more in your learning. Some you also told us that you would like more clubs and we have asked the school to provide these.

Yours sincerely

Graham Lee

Lead Inspector

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