

Garfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102629
Local Authority	Merton
Inspection number	335937
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Susan Thomas-Pounce

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	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kevin Magee
Headteacher	Mary McKenna
Date of previous school inspection	27 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 18 lessons, covering all year groups and 14 class teachers. They visited assemblies, observed break time in the playground, had lunch with the pupils and talked informally to parents and carers. They undertook other general observations, including displays of pupils' work. Inspectors held meetings with governors, staff, the school council and two other groups of pupils. They looked at a range of documentation, including the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, and the school's monitoring records and analysis of pupils' attainment and progress. They also analysed questionnaires returned by 80 parents and carers, 103 pupils and 24 members of staff.

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

- how well teaching, especially in Key Stage 2, promotes pupils' progress
- the use of data to ensure all pupils achieve as well as they can
- the impact of leadership and management in achieving the best possible outcomes for all pupils.

Information about the school

The school is an average-sized primary school. Numbers have increased since its last inspection. The school's building has recently been remodelled, with an extensive rebuilding programme to accommodate the growing roll. Only a very small minority of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and or/disabilities is much lower than average, and a lower proportion than average has a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is much higher than average, with nearly three quarters of all pupils coming from a wide variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. The Early Years Foundation Stage is provided in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school provides a breakfast club each morning.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Garfield is a good school where pupils make good progress and achieve well. There is consistently good teaching in all classes and some outstanding practice. Leadership and management are good and the very experienced headteacher, supported by an effective governing body, ensures that all staff do their very best for the pupils. Since the last inspection, much of the school has been rebuilt and the accommodation is bright, very well maintained and carefully planned to maximise learning. Spacious corridors and high quality displays add to the smart learning environment, which includes a range of specialist accommodation. Classrooms are well equipped with information and communication technology (ICT) and teachers make good use of this technology to enhance pupils' learning. Pupils' personal development is good in all areas. Assemblies and displays around the school are highly supportive of the pupils' spiritual and cultural development, which is good. This is a key feature and enables calm and focused learning to take place. Pupils greatly appreciate the work of the school and the inspirational learning environment that the headteacher, staff and governors have worked so hard to develop. Pupils feel safe and are confident that staff will always listen and deal with any concerns they might have.

The curriculum provides pupils with good opportunities to develop the necessary skills and knowledge for their age. Overall, pupils' attainment is above average by the end of Year 6 and those who are more able do particularly well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same good progress as their peers. However, the small group of pupils who do not have an individual education plan and whose learning difficulties are less acute are not always sufficiently challenged. Their learning slows because teachers' planning and resources are not sufficiently focused on their needs. Occasional examples were observed when teaching assistants were not always used effectively, and opportunities to support pupils' learning were missed. Teachers' marking has improved and inspectors saw some good examples of helpful guidance. However, this is not yet consistent or used well enough to help pupils understand what they need to improve and give them opportunities to act on the guidance given.

The school is good at nurturing individuals and developing their confidence and self-esteem. The care, guidance and support given are of good quality. Consequently, pupils are growing up to be tolerant; fulfilling one of the school's aims of enabling them 'to take their place in society'. Pupils are very happy and keen to be at school, although the poorer attendance among some families does not always reflect this. The school has recently put in place increasingly successful strategies to tackle the low attendance of some pupils. The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have an accurate picture of pupils' progress, as well as the school's strengths and areas for development, which are

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set out clearly in their self-evaluation form. The improvements made since the last inspection are now established. Taking all these into account, the school's capacity to sustain improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress further by:
 - improving the consistency of teachers' guidance on how pupils can make their work better and increasing the opportunities for pupils to act on it
 - ensuring more focused planning and resources for those who find learning challenging.
- Improve the attendance of those who do not attend regularly by extending the effective strategies that have been implemented recently.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress from their starting points because they are taught well. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has fluctuated over the last five years but overall is above average. As a result of well-targeted actions taken by the school, there is a rising trend in pupils' attainment. Almost all pupils achieve well. Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. A very small number of those who find learning challenging are not doing as well as their peers and the school recognises that they need to focus planning and resources much more carefully to meet their needs.

Behaviour in lessons is generally good and makes a strong contribution to learning. Pupils respond well to challenging and interesting work and are keen to engage with learning. Inspectors found examples of pupils commenting about the 'hard to crack maths' they had been working on and their awareness of the cross-curricular links successfully made by their teachers. They know they are often doing at least two subjects at once. A good example of this was in a Year 6 lesson, where pupils discussed how writers use words, images and sounds for different purposes and drew up an emotion graph. They then went to the ICT suite, saw a short film and worked successfully together to analyse film techniques used to portray the story, emotion, time and place. Behaviour in assembly, the playground and around the school is especially good.

Pupils are friendly and welcoming and enjoy school. They value their school community and willingly take on responsibility. The school council has a high profile within the school, having advised on the rebuild of the school and the remodelling of the playground. It was involved in the recent appointment of the new headteacher who will join the school in September. Activities such as the Micro Society, Young Enterprise and Community Quest help pupils to develop a good awareness of the world of work. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to be honest and fair, and they have a good respect for other people's beliefs, values and traditions. Imaginative displays around the

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school help and inspectors heard pupils independently discussing a prayer mat included in a display, and who would use it, where and why. They are encouraged and informed about cultural diversity through the well-planned range of visits and visitors that take place throughout the year. As a result, they readily accept and celebrate diversity. Despite the work the school does to explain the importance of attending regularly, attendance is not as high as it should be. This is because a few pupils are persistently absent or are taken out of school for extended visits abroad to visit relatives or to take a holiday.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use their good subject knowledge effectively, so that pupils are well motivated and keen to do well. Teachers ensure that pupils understand the learning objectives and how they can achieve them. Pupils particularly enjoy opportunities to work together and benefit well by learning from each other. Generally, planned activities meet the needs and interest of different pupils. However, the deployment of additional support in classrooms is not always planned effectively enough to meet the needs of those who

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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find learning challenging or need to catch up. Although much improved since the last inspection, marking does not always show pupils the next step to take in their learning or provide them with sufficient opportunities to try again.

The curriculum is well matched to meet the needs of most pupils. Many enjoy the wide range of extra-curricular enrichment activities on offer. Pupils spoke excitedly about the opportunities to cook, make things in craft and take part in gymnastics. After they had worked with the Royal Shakespeare Company, parents were invited to the performance. Pupils remember the event with great pride. Literacy and ICT are effectively embedded across the curriculum.

The school supports extended learning through its homework club and activities at the well-attended breakfast club. Many steps have been taken to improve attendance. This has raised attendance from low to just within the broadly average range. Nevertheless, the school provides good support for pupils whose learning has suffered as a result of excessive absence. There are many secure systems in place to ease transition between classes and to the wide variety of secondary schools available. The school has worked especially hard to facilitate the growing number of pupils who join the school during the year from other countries. The school can point to many cases where children have been helped to overcome substantial obstacles to their learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The highly experienced headteacher is well supported by a skilled governing body which provides good support and challenge. Together, they exercise clear and effective leadership for the school. They have successfully ensured that the rebuilding and remodelling of the school provides an inspirational place for pupils to learn. This has taken determination and ingenuity and is an illustration of the vision and drive for constant improvement. Senior staff lead the school by example and have been successful in improving teaching and addressing and settling the issues that have caused the fluctuation in attainment over the last five years. Leaders and managers are well motivated to improve the quality of teaching and learning further. Observations of teaching and learning are undertaken systematically, leading to improvements in pupils' learning. Good practice is shared across teams and where appropriate colleagues are mentored effectively. Senior staff recognise that improving marking to move pupils' learning on is a development area for the school.

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Governors make a good contribution to the school. They are experienced and know the school very well. They pay due regard to safeguarding to ensure that the school's arrangements meet current government requirements. Procedures are rigorous and good practice is followed and monitored. Parents speak highly of the school and say they are well informed through regular newsletters and meetings.

The school makes a strong contribution to promoting community cohesion, based on a good understanding of the diversity of the pupils, who come from a wide range of religious and cultural backgrounds. It has created a harmonious community and uses its links with local faith groups to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development successfully. Recently the school has developed a link with a school in Kenya. The school seeks actively to promote equality of opportunity for all its pupils and to meet individual needs. Gaps between different groups are closing and through the careful tracking of pupils' needs, the school has identified where further improvements can be made to overcome variations in performance.

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
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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children start in the Nursery with a range of skills and experiences mostly at levels below those expected for their age and stage of development. Their skills in number are more developed than those in speaking and listening. Some pupils join with little or no understanding of the English language. Good planning ensures that any gaps in their knowledge and understanding are carefully addressed. As a result of the warm and caring environment and good quality teaching, children have a very positive start to their learning and make good progress. This good provision continues in the Reception

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classes so that by the time they enter Year 1 children reach standards that are in line with those expected. Overall, there is a good trend of improvement in all the areas of learning, although speaking and listening remains an area for further development. Very positive relationships exist in the Nursery and Reception classes, whether in teaching the children to count, recognise the properties of different shapes or set up a hairdressing salon. Children thoroughly enjoy all the activities that are arranged for them to choose and several were eager to show the inspector their story writing and the level of reading book they were on. A particularly special moment occurred when the class where learning to sing 'Fr re Jacques' in French and a child asked if she might sing it to the class in her home language of Arabic. The children warmly applauded her confident performance. Arrangements to promote children's welfare are good. Staff know the children well and they ensure that children feel safe and secure. They settle quickly at the start of their day. Provision is led and managed well. Recently, new tracking arrangements have been introduced and this means that assessment is more accurate and better able to inform planning. Consequently, this is helping staff, who are working hard to improve the match of activities to the individual needs of children.

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

Views of parents and carers

About a quarter of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. A large majority have positive views, reflecting the inspection findings. Parents and carers agree that the staff make every effort to ensure every child is happy. One parent spoke for many commenting, 'I am very proud to have my children at Garfield, fantastic teaching and support staff.' The concerns raised by a few parents and carers focused mainly on meeting individual needs, their child's progress, the help they receive to support their child's learning and the account taken of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors consider that the school has regular consultations with parents and carers and that the school is willing to liaise and accommodate the wishes of parents and carers should they need any further information. Several parents and carers commented that communication between school and parents and carers had improved recently with the introduction of parent mail and newsletters. A small number of parents and carers expressed concerns about the attendance policy, which has been changed recently. The school no longer authorises holidays in term time. Inspectors judge that attendance is only improving because of the concerted effort to reduce term-time holidays.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Garfield 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 80 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 316 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	81	14	18	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	64	28	35	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	45	39	49	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	64	27	34	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	69	24	30	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	43	41	51	4	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	48	36	45	3	4	1	1
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)	30	38	36	45	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	44	38	48	3	4	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	54	34	43	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	31	43	54	5	6	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	45	56	30	28	2	3	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	65	26	33	0	0	2	3

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



21 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Garfield Primary School, Merton, SW19 8SB

Thank you for the welcome you gave to the inspection team when we came to inspect your school recently. I should like to thank you for helping us with our work and, in particular, those of you who gave up time to talk to us. I enjoyed the display of the slippers you had made as well as all the other wonderful art, craftwork and cultural displays.

You go to a good school where all the staff care for you well, and help you to make good progress with your work. This means that you achieve well. Your headteacher has created a very strong team of staff and governors who want the very best for you. You told us how much she had done to make your school such a happy and smart place to be. As a result, you told us that you really enjoy school and are very proud of the new buildings and the opportunities you have to learn and develop your interests. I know you are looking forward to exploring your playground when the landscaping is finished. I feel sure you will keep a close eye on the work to make sure it looks just as you planned it.

You have such good attitudes to learning and your behaviour is good; you and your teachers work together well to improve your work. The teaching you receive is good. You told us that if you were worried about anything you knew exactly who could help you the best.

To make your school even better, we have asked your headteacher, the staff and governors to keep working towards raising attainment even further by:

- making sure that the comments teachers make when they mark your work are clear, that you have more time to make your work better and that those of you who find learning challenging have work that is planned just for you
- improving attendance, especially for those of you who take too much time off school.

You can help by making sure that you attend school regularly, and by keeping on working as hard as you do.

Yours sincerely

Susan Thomas-Pounce Lead inspector

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