

# Gilbert Colvin Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 102805        |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Redbridge     |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 335973        |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 6–7 July 2010 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Gordon Ewing  |

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

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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 of pupils on the school roll</b> | 424                                   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                    |
| <b>Chair</b>                               | Kevin Young                           |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Debbie Wiles                          |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 14 June 2007                          |
| <b>School address</b>                      | Strafford Avenue<br>Ilford<br>IG5 0TL |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                    | 020 85504630                          |
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|--------------------------|---------------|
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They visited 24 lessons, observing 16 teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders, members of the governing body, members of staff and groups of pupils. Informal discussions were conducted with some parents and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, including the systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress, pupils' work in their exercise books and teachers' planning and marking. Inspectors took account of separate questionnaires completed by 77 parents and carers, 29 staff and 99 older pupils.

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

- how much progress children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage from their starting points
- the rates of progress that pupils make in English and mathematics and especially those with special educational needs and/or disabilities through different parts of the school
- how effectively leaders monitor the quality of teaching and use assessment information so that pupils achieve as well as they can, particularly for more able pupils
- how the school is responding to significant staff turnover at all levels to ensure that pupils' achievement, personal development and well-being are secure and maintained.

## Information about the school

Gilbert Colvin is a larger than normal primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above average. The largest groups of pupils are those from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are at the early stages of learning English is above average. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is close to that found nationally; predominantly these pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises two Nursery and two Reception classes. There are two classes per year group through to Year 6.

There has been a significantly high turnover of staff in the past three years. This includes three headteachers in as many years. The current headteacher has been in post since January 2010. A number of other key leadership roles are currently held in a temporary capacity

There is a pre-school provision and an out-of-school club, which are not managed by the governors. These were not inspected during this inspection.

**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**

**3**

## Main findings

Gilbert Colvin Primary is a satisfactory school that is improving after a significant period of turbulence and uncertainty. The new headteacher is bringing about key strategic changes so that the school is turning the corner and green shoots of recovery are increasingly evident. As one parent wrote, 'The new headteacher and the leadership team have done well to stabilise the school.' The staff are working hard to deliver a clear and unified vision for raising standards and improving the life chances for all pupils. As a consequence, from broadly average starting points, pupils make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in Years 1 and 2, attaining above average standards in reading and mathematics. Particularly high staff turnover in Years 3 to 6 has resulted in less consistent rates of progress for pupils. Nonetheless, by the end of Year 6, pupils maintain above average standards in reading and mathematics. This represents satisfactory progress from their starting points. However, pupils' attainment and rates of progress in writing are not yet high by the time they leave. A key strength of the school is the successful focus on promoting pupils' personal development and well-being, which is reflected in their good attendance, positive attitudes to learning and clear enjoyment of school.

The headteacher's prompt and focused action to improve the quality of teaching is beginning to bear fruit and the eagerness of staff to improve is palpable. Teaching is satisfactory overall and there is some better practice in some classes. However, inconsistencies remain in the way teachers match the learning activities to the needs of all pupils, especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for more able pupils. In some lessons, assessment information is not used rigorously to ensure that tasks are accurately tuned to pupils' abilities and opportunities are missed to deploy teaching assistants effectively. Consequently, support to some pupils with particular needs is not always managed to best effect. Some pupils are actively encouraged to assess their own learning and that of their peers, but this good practice is not commonplace. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and the school community is cohesive and harmonious.

Senior leaders, guided effectively by the new headteacher, are having an evident impact on raising morale and rebuilding confidence across the school community. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and, with the support of the effective governing body, the school is well placed to embed further improvement. Some middle leaders are now involved in evaluating aspects of the school's work, the success of which it is too early to gauge. The senior leadership rightly recognises that the role of all middle leaders in driving improvement is an area for focused development. However, the current lack of some permanent leaders for key posts of

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responsibility is hampering the drive for sustained improvement. Taking into account the recent impact of the new leadership, the strong governing body and the fact that the school will be fully staffed from September 2010, the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the quality of teaching so that the large majority of lessons are judged as good or better by the summer term 2011 by:
  - providing further training so that teachers understand the components of good teaching
  - ensuring that lessons provide consistent, high levels of challenge for all groups of learners, especially the more able, by ensuring assessment information is used effectively to plan day-to-day learning activities
  - ensuring that teachers know the needs of pupils so that they provide teaching assistants with appropriate ways to support and maximise learning.
- Raise standards in writing by the summer term 2011 by:
  - monitoring pupils' writing on a frequent and systematic basis so teachers ensure there is effective progression in developing writing skills
  - introducing daily writing opportunities so that pupils write with increasing frequency and fluency
  - involving pupils in the evaluation of their writing and that of their peers so that they can assess the quality of their writing more accurately.
- Improve middle leadership by:
  - ensuring that new and existing leaders are clear about their roles and responsibilities within a clearly defined leadership structure
  - ensuring that leaders have opportunities to participate in nationally recognised leadership training courses
  - setting performance management objectives that are closely linked to improving pupils' attainment and progress.

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

Pupils' good attitudes to learning are evident in their perseverance, cooperation and determination to succeed in lessons. They are increasingly confident in sharing ideas with their 'talk partners' and particularly enjoy activities that bring learning to life. For example, as part of Healthy Living Week, Year 2 pupils, in a literacy lesson about designing an advertisement to promote healthy eating, spoke knowledgeably about the characteristics of a healthy diet. One pupil confidently explained how eating too much chocolate increased the risk of Type 2 diabetes, heart disease and obesity. In a Year 4 numeracy lesson, pupils tackled practical problems linked to ratio with vigour. Pupils of all abilities achieved well because the level of challenge was good and their teamwork

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and discussion ensured that ideas were tested and vocabulary enriched. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, and those who speak English as an additional language, make similar progress to that of their peers. However, teaching assistants are not always deployed to best effect and, consequently, opportunities are missed to develop some pupils' independent learning skills or to help them make quicker strides in their learning.

Pupils are proud of their school. They feel safe and say that teachers take good care of them. Their behaviour is good and racist incidents and bullying are rare. The school council organises fundraising activities to support charities locally and worldwide. They are keen to take a greater role in making the school even better. Year 6 pupils report that they really enjoy opportunities to work with younger pupils and find it rewarding to see them improve their social skills and develop self-confidence. The school has plans in place to increase pupils' understanding about local issues and to improve engagement with community groups locally and further afield. Pupils are developing some of the wider skills needed to equip them for the future but do not have a secure understanding of the next steps they need to take to succeed in their learning. As a result, their preparation for the next stage of their education and the world beyond is only satisfactory.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>   | 2        |
| 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        |
| <b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>   | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Pupils' behaviour</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>   | 2        |

<sup>1</sup> 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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|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b> | <b>2</b> |
|--|----------|

### How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching varies considerably. Particular strengths are teachers' subject knowledge, good use of talk partners, growing links across the curriculum and the use of laptops and multimedia to enliven lessons. A common weakness of some teaching is that work is not matched well enough to pupils' needs and the level of challenge is undemanding. Consequently, more able pupils, in particular, are not making the progress of which they are capable. Teaching assistants are enthusiastic and committed but are not always deployed effectively, for example when teachers are leading the whole class or when the lesson plan is insufficiently focused on how best to support the needs of those with learning or language difficulties. Across the school, the use of assessment to track pupils' progress and adapt day-to-day activities to pupils' stage of learning is inconsistent. Teachers' marking is positive, offers praise and is up to date. A recent initiative to improve the quality of guidance to pupils on how to take the next step in their learning is starting to pay dividends and pupils are beginning to develop increasing independence.

The satisfactory curriculum is broad, balanced and enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular visits, activities and themed weeks. Particular strengths are music, drama and sport. Pupils are actively encouraged to participate in daily physical exercise, and cross-curricular links are being established so that pupils are beginning to apply skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology across a range of learning activities, but this is not yet fully embedded. Pupils lack daily opportunities to develop their writing skills for different purposes. This acts as a limiting factor on progress, especially in their writing.

Pastoral care is satisfactory overall. The recent appointment of a special needs coordinator is leading to improvements in the provision of targeted intervention programmes for key pupils, the impact of which is too early to gauge. Effective links are established with outside agencies to ensure that the needs of vulnerable pupils are met so that they make similar progress to their classmates. The school's robust and consistent actions to maintain above average attendance continue to be successful.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

### How effective are leadership and management?

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The headteacher's calm but determined leadership is successfully navigating the school out of turbulent waters. The effects of high staff turnover are now diminishing as she is rebuilding a staff team that is growing in confidence and is beginning to demonstrate the capacity to share in the strategic direction of the school. Recent actions to improve teaching are beginning to take hold, for example in the focused approach to the planning across the curriculum, though opportunities to developing writing skills in different contexts are underdeveloped. Monitoring systems are being established and some middle leaders are taking steps to sharpen self-evaluation so that the ambition and drive for improvement are shared more evenly. A programme of training and leadership mentoring is being established to ensure that all leaders, including those joining the school, have the capacity to move the school forward.

There is no significant variation in the outcomes for different groups of pupils and the school satisfactorily promotes equality of opportunity and ensures there is no discrimination. Governors have a good understanding of safeguarding issues for ensuring the safety of pupils and staff. However, they recognise that more needs to be done to ensure that temporary staff and those new to the school are effectively informed of safeguarding procedures and that records of training provide a clear overview of future needs. Governors provide effective challenge to the school's leadership and have played a formative role in stabilising the school after considerable uncertainty. Links between home and school are strengthening and the school's effective work with a range of partners, especially in music, drama and sport, make a positive contribution to pupils' enjoyment and personal development. The school has a good understanding of the religious and ethnic mix of its own community and promotes respect for individuals by celebrating the diversity of the school. The curriculum provides some opportunities for pupils to be aware of other cultures but links with national and global communities are underdeveloped.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:<br>The leadership and management of teaching and learning   | 3        |
| <b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b> | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>  | <b>2</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>   | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>  | <b>3</b> |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>   | <b>3</b> |



|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <p><b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b><br/>Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms</p> |          |
| <b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>   | <b>3</b> |

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery with the range of skills and abilities expected for their age. Effective links are established with parents and carers so that children settle quickly into school routines and make satisfactory progress in both Nursery and Reception, though their writing skills are not as well developed as other communication skills. They enjoy their learning and work well together and independently. They feel safe and secure at school and demonstrate good relationships with each other and with adults. Behaviour is consistently good and they adopt healthy practices, for example in washing hands before activities with food and when eating healthy snacks. Support staff are well deployed and observations and assessments are becoming increasingly accurate. Some activities, however, lack challenge and pace and the outdoor area, particularly for Reception children, lacks the range of stimulating teaching aids necessary to support high quality learning. Opportunities to develop writing are underdeveloped, especially outside. There is a strong team ethos across the staff. They are committed to raising standards and improving the quality of provision. However, the extended absence of a permanent leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage is acting as a brake on the drive for improvement.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>                   | <b>3</b> |
| Taking into account:   |          |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage                          | 3        |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage                       | 3        |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 3        |

## Views of parents and carers

It is clear from the questionnaires returned from parents and carers that the school enjoys the confidence and support of the very large majority of the parents and carers who responded. Almost all those who responded were happy with their child's experience at the school. A few parents expressed concern about the high turnover of staff, particularly at senior leadership level, and most agree that the school is now being led and managed effectively. One parent commented, 'The new headteacher is very approachable and deals with issues raised promptly, which inspires confidence.' A small minority recorded concerns about the degree to which the school takes account of concerns or suggestions and how the school informs them about their children's progress. Inspectors discussed these points with the headteacher, who readily

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acknowledged that these were areas for improvement. She reported that steps are in hand to increase the frequency of newsletters, to establish more effective systems to consult parents and carers and to improve the level and quality of information about the progress that children make.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gilbert Colvin 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 77 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 424 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements  | Strongly Agree |    | Agree |    | Disagree |    | Strongly disagree |   |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|----|-------------------|---|
|   | Total          | %  | Total | %  | Total    | %  | Total             | % |
| My child enjoys school  | 44             | 57 | 31    | 40 | 2        | 3  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school keeps my child safe  | 38             | 49 | 39    | 51 | 0        | 0  | 0                 | 0 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress   | 24             | 31 | 41    | 53 | 7        | 9  | 2                 | 3 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school   | 25             | 32 | 41    | 53 | 9        | 12 | 1                 | 1 |
| The teaching is good at this school   | 31             | 40 | 31    | 40 | 9        | 12 | 1                 | 1 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning  | 29             | 38 | 38    | 49 | 5        | 6  | 2                 | 3 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle   | 32             | 42 | 40    | 52 | 2        | 3  | 2                 | 3 |
| 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) | 21             | 27 | 40    | 52 | 7        | 9  | 2                 | 3 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs  | 30             | 39 | 35    | 45 | 8        | 10 | 1                 | 1 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour  | 23             | 30 | 43    | 56 | 8        | 10 | 3                 | 4 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns   | 18             | 23 | 44    | 57 | 6        | 8  | 1                 | 1 |
| The school is led and managed effectively   | 29             | 38 | 37    | 48 | 7        | 9  | 0                 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school   | 36             | 47 | 35    | 45 | 5        | 6  | 0                 | 0 |

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](http://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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul> |
| 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.**



9 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gilbert Colvin Primary School, Ilford IG 5 0TL

It was a privilege to visit your school recently to see you at work. You made us feel very welcome and you spoke very positively about your school life.

You clearly enjoy school and learn a lot whilst you are there. Your parents and carers are very happy with the school, too. Of the many things we liked about your school, the following are particularly worthy of highlighting.

- You behave well, especially when lessons are interesting, and you get on really well together as a whole-school community.
- Your attendance is good. Well done.
- Your standards in reading and mathematics are secure but your writing needs to improve further.
- Most of you feel safe and secure and thoroughly enjoy lessons and the broad range of extra curricular activities on offer.
- The staff work hard to ensure that you develop as well-rounded individuals and help you to develop good attitudes to learning.
- You are keen to improve your school. You play an important part by taking on responsibilities such as being a school councillor and sports leader.
- The school offers you lots of after-school clubs that improve your physical and personal development. Sport, music and drama are particularly good.

Everyone wants the school to be even better and to achieve this we have asked the staff and governors to:

- ensure that existing and new subject staff have a better idea about how to plan activities in lessons that fully meet your needs
- improve standards of writing to those levels you achieve in mathematics and reading
- improve the quality of teaching to consistently good so that teachers use assessment to ensure that your tasks in lessons are really challenging and you receive regular advice on how to take the next step to in your learning.

We wish you all every success in your future education and life.

Yours sincerely

Gordon Ewing  
Lead Inspector

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