

Gordon Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102808
Local Authority	jill.tilley@redbridge.gov.uk
Inspection number	335974
Inspection dates	17–18 November 2009
Reporting inspector	PeterSudworth

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Freeman
Headteacher	Jill Tilley
Date of previous school inspection	8 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 10 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, various staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, for example that relating to safeguarding, curriculum organisation and information to track pupils' progress. Parent and staff questionnaire responses were analysed. Inspectors looked in detail at the following:

- the reasons for the fall in results at Year 2 in the last two years and what the school has done to reverse the trend
- what actions the school is taking to address the above average percentage of persistent absenteeism
- the school's strategies for supporting the progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language, particularly those at the initial stages of learning English.
- the success of strategies to keep up the momentum for improvement given the difficulties in recruiting both staff and governors.

Information about the school

There are eight classes including the two part-time Nursery classes. Pupils begin the Nursery after their third birthday depending on available places. About half of these children move on to the Reception Year where they are joined by pupils from other settings. Pupils attend the Reception classes full-time from September. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average. The vast majority of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with a very high proportion of the pupils speaking English as an additional language. At least 28 different home languages are spoken by pupils. The largest minority ethnic group are pupils from an Asian background. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than the national average and barriers to learning are mainly difficulties in acquiring basic skills. The proportion of pupils who leave or join the school at other than customary times is higher than that found nationally.

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

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and praise the staff for the way they look after their children. Pupils enjoy the happy environment and make friends easily across different cultures. Pupils develop well as young people and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They show a good awareness of healthy and safe living.

There have been several staff changes in recent times and some staff are still adjusting to new roles. Teaching is satisfactory in the main and there are some instances of good teaching. It is good in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Here children make good progress, especially in acquiring English and in developing social skills which help their learning in Years 1 and 2. Very respectful relationships between staff and pupils in all classes encourage a settled learning environment. Teachers, however, do not always challenge all pupils sufficiently well and tasks are sometimes too easy, especially in mathematics. The school's assessment systems have undergone a recent review so that results of pupils' ongoing progress can be used more effectively to move children's learning on. There is more work to be done on this so that the staff can set realistic targets for their pupils and use the information to target pupils' learning more effectively. In the main pupils achieve satisfactorily in reaching average standards and are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education.

Pupils' attendance is below the national average because of some persistent absentees, despite the improvements as a result of the school's good efforts and those of the education welfare officer. Some parents do not send their children to school regularly enough, which has an adverse effect on the school's figures and importantly on their children's progress.

The school recognises the need to enhance the role of subject leaders in being more proactive in monitoring standards and planning for further improvements. The governing body is supportive of the school but does not yet have a clear enough perception of its role and how it can be the critical friend. Recruitment difficulties and changes of governor personnel have hindered its development. The school has not yet carried out a full audit of community cohesion to inform a plan for its further development.

The care of the pupils is a particular strength and the school works hard with other agencies to ensure that all pupils receive the help that they require. The school recognises the need to revise its curriculum to make it more interesting and to link subjects more effectively together to help the pupils' learning.

The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve. There is some difference in teaching quality between the different classes and variability in progress from year to

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year. The school's procedures for self-evaluation and the accuracy of its own judgements are satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further so that all pupils, and in particular those who are more able, are challenged more consistently by:
 - applying their knowledge of the pupils' capabilities more effectively when planning lessons
 - building on pupils' previous successes in learning
 - making better use of recorded assessments.
- To benefit pupils' learning, ensure that all staff are trained in using and interpreting the new pupil tracking grids so that they develop confidence in:
 - setting appropriate targets for the pupils
 - identifying those pupils not making expected progress and planning provision to improve this.
- Enhance the work of the governing body so that governors are clearer about their roles and responsibilities and develop effective systems for helping to move the school on by:
 - training governors in their responsibilities
 - enabling them to share good practice with other governing bodies.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The school's records of pupils' performance show a decline in the pupils' performance at the end of Year 2 over recent years. Attainment is broadly average and pupils make satisfactory progress. A major factor in this decline is the increased number of pupils joining or leaving the school during the school year. Staffing turbulence has also been a contributory factor. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have continued to progress well because of the good individual support that they have received. Of the different ethnic groups, pupils of an Asian background usually attain best. Overall pupils who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress from the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Girls did much better than the boys in 2008 but the most recent results indicate little significant difference between the respective performances of these groups. Pupils who remain at the school throughout the Key Stage make better progress in the main than those who do not. Targets for pupils currently in Year 2 indicate a broadly similar picture of attainment to last year.

Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their work. They are enthusiastic about their learning and usually make good use of their time in lessons. They engage enthusiastically in opportunities for discussion in lessons and take their work seriously. They feel safe and know the importance of holding an adult's hand when crossing the

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road. They also know the importance of a healthy lifestyle. As one said, 'It is important to get fresh air and to eat healthily.' The school council is developing well and has been instrumental in obtaining improved equipment for the playground. Pupils have a good appreciation of different cultures and show good respect for these. They get along well together and show much respect for their teachers. They demonstrate a good awareness of right and wrong and take responsibility for themselves and for others. They make a satisfactory contribution to the school, local and wider communities.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	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	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?

Classrooms are well ordered. Good relationships between staff and pupils, supported by effective use of praise, make for a good learning environment. The use of 'talk partners' in some classes to discuss particular questions supports the pupils' fluency in English. Despite this, there are also missed opportunities to engage pupils in small group conversations.

Staff use equipment well to help pupils with their learning. In a good Year 1 lesson effective use was made of new technology to help pupils understand 'number

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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sentences'. Pupils moved passengers on to a bus on a large electronic screen. This helped the pupils to understand the writing of simple equations as they added the number to that already on the bus and wrote the equation. Good individual attention for pupils who arrive speaking very little English supports their understanding of basic language and helps them settle. In some mathematics lessons pupils are not challenged enough, particularly able pupils, and they find the work easy. Pupils do not always understand what success will look like in their activities because expectations are not made clear enough. Staff make satisfactory use of assessment to plan learning. The school is working on a new system to improve this. Marking is up to date and effective. The school recognises the need to review its curriculum to make it more interesting for the pupils and to link subjects together more effectively so that learning is reinforced. A start has been made on this. Visits to local places of interest support pupils' understanding. Visitors, such as the police, help the pupils to understand matters of personal safety. A small number of extra activities provide for pupils' additional interests, including chess. The school gives a good emphasis to pupils' personal, social and health education and this is reflected in their development as young people.

The care afforded to the pupils is a real strength. Risk assessments for visits are very carefully considered and methodically undertaken. The school is welcoming to parents and the good links with them includes regular opportunities to discuss their child's progress. The school champions the cause of children well, and vulnerable pupils are particularly well provided for and monitored. Staff are persistent in pursuing external professional support to run alongside their own efforts for these pupils and getting the best deal for them. Staff are kept up to date with child protection matters through regular training. The school has rigorous measures in place to promote attendance and works well with the education welfare officer. This has resulted in significant improvements to attendance which, nevertheless, remains below the national figures. Helpful strategies to ease the transition from Reception to Year 1 and from Year 2 to the juniors are in place, but these have not yet had time to make a noticeable impact.

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?

Partnerships to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are effective and the good links with other agencies are very beneficial. Parents are welcomed in the school and they in turn are very supportive of the staff. Safeguarding

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procedures are rigorous and well established and reflect the good care arrangements. The senior leadership team maintains a satisfactory oversight of the school's development. The school development plan has broad objectives but it does not set out clearly the actions needed to bring about improvement. This hinders the drive for improvement. Changes in staffing have contributed to some subject leaders not yet fully managing their roles and responsibilities. As a result, expectations are not high enough in all subjects.

The chair of governors is new to the post and enthusiastic. Overall, however, governors are unsure of how to fulfil their roles and responsibilities successfully. Governors still show much reliance on the school for information and so they cannot yet challenge effectively.

The deputy headteacher has worked hard to introduce a whole-school tracking system that analyses performance by groups of pupils but it is not yet firmly embedded enough to enable staff to remove barriers to learning for all pupils and ensure that staff promote equality of opportunity fully.

The school has informally evaluated its contribution to community cohesion within the school context but it has not extended this to analysing community cohesion in other dimensions such as locally and in the United Kingdom. Consequently there is no plan to take this further. The school has satisfactory links with the local community.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery and the Reception classes is below that

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expected for their ages, particularly in their language development and personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress in these aspects during the Early Years Foundation Stage, and their attainment in the different areas of their learning by the end of the Reception Year is broadly in line with expectations. The school works hard to help the children with their knowledge of letter sounds through a focused programme of work. Happy and pleasant relationships and good teaching with an emphasis on children's independence support the children's interest in what they do. At times there are not enough structured and teacher-led activities, however. Children become absorbed in the activities that they initiate themselves. Staff, including teaching assistants, are adept in developing the children's language as they work alongside them and this approach supports the children's acquisition of English. Able children, though, are not always extended enough. The children behave sensibly and take turns well. The provision of outdoor activities is satisfactory but some equipment is unattractive and worn. Safeguarding arrangements and the welfare of the children are particular strengths. Role play areas are imaginative. In a Reception class, a 'cave' encouraged the children to use torches and books with good links across different areas of their learning in the activity. The new leadership has not yet had time to make a significant impact on the provision and is satisfactory.

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	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents are strongly supportive of the school. There are no issues that a significant number of parents raise but only incidental ones, such as a very small number having a preference for a termly report and tests. The school keeps a close eye on pupils' progress during the year and issues an end-of-year report. There are sufficient opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress with the staff during the year. The school correctly does not rely on one-off tests to judge the pupils' attainment and its policy of assessing on a regular basis through observations and marking gives it an accurate view of the pupils' progress.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gordon Infant 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 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 205 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	47	23	51	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	18	40	27	60	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	24	32	71	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	29	31	69	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	29	31	69	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	12	27	29	64	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	29	30	69	0	0	0	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)	6	13	27	60	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	6	13	32	71	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	8	18	31	69	2	4	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	18	27	60	3	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	29	25	56	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	31	29	64	0	0	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 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.



19 November 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Gordon Infant School, Ilford IG1 1SU

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited the school and for talking to us about what you do. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing you at work. You get on very well together and show a lot of respect for your teachers. It was interesting to learn that you have suggested equipment for the playground which has helped you to enjoy your playtimes much more. The teachers take very good care of you and you develop well as young people. You know quite a lot about keeping yourselves safe and living healthily. The school provides a satisfactory education for you and you are reaching a standard which is about right for your age.

We have suggested some ideas so that the staff and governors can continue to develop the school and improve your progress. We have asked your school to:

- improve teaching even more and in doing so make sure that each of you is working hard, especially those of you who find learning easy
- help staff to use the new systems which aim to keep an eye on how you are doing with your work so that you all make good progress
- assist the school's governors to understand their responsibilities so that they can help the school to move on and progress.

Thank you once again for your help when we visited. I wish you all well for the future and hope that you will continue to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth

Lead inspector

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