

Gilmour Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104543
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	336329
Inspection dates	16–17 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Paul Bamber

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ian Henderson
Headteacher	Mr P Gibbons
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2007
School address	Whitehedge Road Liverpool Merseyside L19 1RD
Telephone number	0151 4274682
Fax number	0151 4940905
Email address	gilmourj-ao@gilmour-jun.liverpool.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and observed 12 members of staff leading lessons or small group work. They held discussions with groups of pupils, parents and carers, the Chair of the Governing Body and with staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the work in pupils' books, improvement plans, records of pupils' progress, minutes of governing body meetings. They analysed 119 questionnaires completed by parents and carers and took account of the views pupils and staff expressed in the separate questionnaires they completed.

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

- the success the school has had in improving the quality of pupils' writing since the last inspection
- the effect of the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are gifted and talented
- the degree to which pupils are involved in decision making and how they are made aware of their individual targets and assess their own work and progress.

Information about the school

The vast majority of the pupils who attend this average-sized school are of White British backgrounds. An average proportion is entitled to a free school meal. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The school is in receipt of several awards which endorse its success in promoting pupils' healthy lifestyles, the Arts and in its investment in staff and training. The school also has the Financial Management Standards in Schools Award.

Since the last inspection there has been considerable refurbishment to the accommodation and a new deputy headteacher has been appointed.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This school continues to provide its pupils with an outstanding education. Leaders and managers have not rested on their laurels since the last inspection, continuing the drive to improve outcomes and the quality of provision even further. The rise in standards in writing, enhanced accommodation and an increasingly rich curriculum, provide telling evidence of the headteacher's and his senior team's success in securing improvement. The maintenance of high quality provision in most aspects of the school's work is the result of very rigorous self-evaluation and of effective action by all leaders and managers. These factors illustrate the school's outstanding capacity to maintain excellence and achieve further improvement.

Key to pupils' outstanding achievement, to their at least above average attainment and to the excellence of their academic progress and personal development, are high quality teaching and an extremely rich and stimulating curriculum. Staff make effective use of their day-to-day assessments of pupils' attainment and progress to set very appropriate tasks in lessons. However, the quality of teachers' marking and of target-setting for individual pupils requires improvement in order to raise it from good to outstanding.

Pupils' sense of well-being and the degree to which they feel very safe is due to the excellent care and support they receive. Comments from pupils, such as, 'this is a very joyful school and I like it a lot', and, 'this school is a safe place to be at all times', sum up the vast majority of pupils' views. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning and make extremely good academic progress. The superb array of opportunities available for them to exercise, take responsibility, to perform and to experience the diversity of other cultures, enables them to become healthy, confident and well-rounded young citizens.

Parents and carers are very supportive of the school's work, 'I have only praise for the headteacher and the staff. I feel that they all go that extra mile with educational and extra-curricular activities', typifies parents' and carers' views of the potency of leadership and of the richness of the curriculum. Other parents and carers attest to the harmony and inclusiveness of the Gilmour community.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of assessment and of target-setting from good to outstanding, by:
 - extending the high quality of marking seen in writing to other curriculum areas so that pupils are clear about how to improve their work in all subjects
 - encouraging teachers to make pupils more keenly aware of their personal or

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group learning targets and to refer to these targets more frequently when marking pupils' work

- involving pupils more in indicating where and how they have improved their work as a result of teachers' advice.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning and participating in the wonderful range of opportunities the school offers. They show an eagerness to work hard and always do their very best. Their ability to collaborate is strong and they concentrate well, persevere and take on challenges. They make excellent academic progress from their individual starting points. Over the past five years, Year 6 pupils have attained high overall standards in national tests. The current Year 6, a weaker cohort than is the norm, are attaining at above average standards, but have made very good progress from their starting points. The proportion of pupils who reach the higher Level 5 in the Year 6 national tests is much higher than average, indicating that more able pupils achieve very well. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are more vulnerable, also make very good progress, both academically and in their personal development.

In lessons and around the school, pupils behave extremely well. They are welcoming, articulate and enquiring. They are very involved in assemblies, leading hymn singing, talking about their work, and performing playlets and dance routines. Such activities boost their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils are morally mature and socially very adept. Their pursuance of a healthy lifestyle is very evident in their sensible meal choices and in their very keen participation in activities, such as swimming and the martial arts. Pupils are very aware of the range of different cultures because they communicate with pupils in diverse communities in the United Kingdom and with pupils in Europe and Africa. They have an in-depth knowledge of the foods, art and values of different cultures, as a result of links, visits and visitors. Pupils develop excellent skills which will equip them to succeed in their next stage of education and in life.

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan work which is stimulating and very successfully captures pupils' interest. Consequently, pupils are thoroughly engrossed and play a full and active part in lessons, keenly concentrating and with obvious enjoyment. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work rate, behaviour and commitment. In mathematics lessons, teachers use games creatively to make learning more relevant and enjoyable. Staff often set time targets for the completion of tasks which sustain a high tempo in learning. Occasionally, less effective time management has the effect of restricting the time available for pupils to consolidate their skills and to apply new learning. Teachers' marking of writing is very effective and pupils receive clear advice about how to improve. This practice is less well developed in other subjects and pupils do not have a clear picture about how to make their work better and how well they are meeting targets. Pupils are not fully involved in assessing their own work or indicating how they have responded to advice. In contrast, teachers use their informal day-to-day assessments of pupils' attainment and progress very well to plan tasks that successfully match ability.

The curriculum is innovative, with a very rich diet of out-of-class activities. The school's strong focus on fine art, the performing arts and on sporting activity contributes to high standards in these areas. Their participation in the city's arts festival, in various competitions and projects in the community, enhances greatly their self-confidence and life-skills. Visits to local cultural centres and residential visits broaden pupils' horizons. Opportunities to hold membership of the school council, to be part of Liverpool's school parliament and to visit the Houses of Parliament, all enhance pupils' awareness of the democratic process.

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Pupils are extremely well cared for and supported. All feel valued and included. The excellent provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those identified with particular talents enables them to flourish and plays a significant part in the extremely good progress they make. Very positive links with external agencies contribute very well to pupils' care and well-being. Effective systems lead to good attendance and punctuality.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	<p>1</p>

How effective are leadership and management?

The very experienced headteacher, ably supported by his senior leadership team, inspires high morale and keen ambition among all staff. Accurate self-evaluation enables leaders and managers to plan very effectively for continued improvement. Rigorous checks on the school's performance and on the quality of teaching and learning ensure that high standards are maintained and they facilitate the identification of appropriate professional development. Challenging targets are invariably met or exceeded.

Governance is good. The governing body keeps a watchful eye on school performance, is prudent in its financial management and supports the school's work very positively. However, individual governors are rarely able to visit classrooms during school time which limits their understanding of provision and their knowledge of pupils' views.

The school engages very well with most parents and carers and provides them with regular information about school events and their children's progress. The many and varied partnerships established with other schools, colleges and civic bodies, together with sports organisations, greatly enhance pupils' learning and life chances. For example, the link with a timpanist has nurtured the excellent samba band which has played to a packed house at the Anfield Stadium.

The school's excellent safeguarding procedures are evident in all areas of its work. Staff are thoroughly checked that they are suitable to work with young people and child protection is a priority. Community cohesion is promoted outstandingly well. It is carefully planned and evaluated ensuring wide links with schools and communities at home and abroad. These links have a positive impact on the school's ethos and develop in pupils an awareness of the importance of celebrating the similarities and differences between diverse communities and cultures. The school's success in enabling all pupils to thrive academically and personally and in encouraging them all to participate in the wide range of activities on offer, illustrate its excellent promotion of equality of opportunity.

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The extremely good outcomes for pupils and the outstanding provision for them, mean that the school offers excellent value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Over half of parents and carers responded to the inspection questionnaire and further comments and views were contributed by parents and carers at a meeting held with them during the inspection. A large majority hold very positive views about the school. They were most positive about:

- the school enabling their children to have a healthy lifestyle
- how safe their children are in school
- the degree to which their children enjoy school
- how well the school is led and managed.

A very small minority had concerns. These were that:

- their children did not make enough progress
- the school took insufficient notice of their concerns or suggestions
- they received too little information about their children's progress.

Inspectors concur with parents and carers positive comments. They found that hardly any pupils failed to make expected progress and that many made better progress than expected. Individual concerns were anonymously discussed with the school and inspectors were satisfied that the school does all it can to address parents and carers' concerns. Inspectors found that the information provided for parents and carers about their children's progress was of good quality.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gilmour Junior 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 119 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 226 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	85	71	28	24	3	3	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	76	64	38	32	2	2	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	54	45	51	43	10	8	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	45	49	41	14	12	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	62	52	50	42	4	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	60	50	48	40	9	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	58	49	41	1	1	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)	51	43	53	45	5	4	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	47	51	43	6	5	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	52	44	53	45	5	4	6	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	42	35	62	52	7	6	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	70	59	39	33	2	2	4	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	65	55	48	40	2	2	2	2

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.



18 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gilmour Junior School, Liverpool, L19 1RD

Thank you so much for the lovely welcome you gave the other inspectors and me when we inspected your school recently. It was a delight to be with you in your lessons and assemblies and to talk with you at other times. Special thanks to the school council, to the 'stars' who performed so well in assembly and to the samba band.

You go to an outstanding school. It is outstanding because:

- you are taught so well and, therefore, do very well in your work
- the care and support you receive is excellent
- you have so many exciting and varied activities to do, especially in art, drama, music and sport
- the school is run very well
- your behaviour is excellent and you grow into very responsible and positive young citizens.

Your headteacher knows that even in an outstanding school there are still things that can be better. I have, therefore, asked him and the school's governors to:

- make sure that all your work is marked as well as it is in English
- make you more aware of your learning targets
- encourage you to point out to your teachers when you have followed their advice about how to improve your work.

You can certainly help with the last of these. I wish you well for your future. Keep on enjoying school and joining in all the wonderful things on offer to you.

Yours sincerely

Mr Paul Bamber

Lead inspector

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