

Garston Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104620
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	336337
Inspection dates	30 June –1 July 2010
Reporting inspector	Marguerite McCloy HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	127
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs E Lyons
Headteacher	Mr R Widdowson
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2006
School address	Holman Road Liverpool Merseyside L19 5NS
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors, with one additional inspector for half a day. Six lessons were observed, along with shorter visits to classes to see the pupils at work and their work in books; five teachers and several teaching assistants or support staff were seen; meetings were held with the headteacher and assistant headteacher and other staff, a group of pupils, a local authority school improvement adviser and three members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including key policies, self-evaluation and improvement plans, and the school's tracking data on pupils' progress. Thirty-three questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed, along with eight completed by staff and 77 by pupils.

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

- pupils' attainment, learning and progress across the school in lessons and over time, particularly in writing
- pupils' behaviour and enjoyment of learning, and other aspects of their personal development outcomes
- how effectively teachers use assessment information to inform their lesson planning and show pupils what they need to do to improve their work
- the effectiveness of senior leaders in monitoring and evaluating the school's provision to drive improvement and raise attainment.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average sized school, although the number of pupils on roll has increased considerably in the last two years. More pupils than is usual leave or join the school at times other than the start of the Reception Year. Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is made in a class containing pupils in Reception and Year 1. The very large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and a few speak English as an additional language. A well-above-average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also well above average.

There are privately run pre-school and after-school provision on the school's site which were not part of this inspection. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, Activemark, Investors in People status and Healthy Schools award.

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

Pupils, parents, carers and staff are virtually unanimous in expressing their positive views about the school's family atmosphere and the high levels of care and consideration provided. Pupils really enjoy their learning and appreciate all that the school does for them. They particularly enjoy the range of enrichment and after-school activities, trips, visitors and volunteers that enhance the good curriculum. Typical comments made by pupils were 'the teachers are really good and are always there for me' and 'everyone is friendly and kind'.

Although many of the pupils' personal development outcomes are good, their attainment is just below average. Fluctuations in the number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 makes the school's national test results in English, mathematics and science less reliable in checking for patterns of attainment over time. For example, from a cohort of 11 pupils in 2006 the current Year 6 consists of 31 pupils: more than half of these entered the school during Key Stage 2. Achievement is satisfactory and the school has not yet 'crossed the boundary' to achieve good overall effectiveness. Teaching, despite being good in many lessons, is not consistently ensuring that pupils make more rapid progress to plug the gaps in their learning and raise attainment. The rate of improvement in some areas identified at the school's last inspection, has been variable and has only recently begun to gather pace, contributing to the school's satisfactory capacity to improve. For example, assessment information and tracking data are not always used effectively by leaders to identify and take firm action if the progress made by individual pupils appears to be slower than expected. Teachers are improving the accuracy of their assessments and the use of targets to challenge individuals and groups of pupils, but more work remains to be done to raise expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics and English, particularly in writing.

Children receive a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage and benefit from constructive links with the on site pre-school provision. Garston Primary is an inclusive school that promotes equal opportunities well and does not tolerate discrimination. There are no significant differences in the achievements of particular groups of learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, or those for whom English is not their first language. Pupils who arrive in school at other than the usual times are warmly welcomed and settle in very well. Pupils make a good contribution to their school and the local community, participating in a number of events and fundraising opportunities and taking on responsibilities as prefects or school council members.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise standards in mathematics and English, particularly in writing, and increase the pace of pupils' learning, by:
 - – making more effective use of the school's wide range of tracking data to identify gaps in learning or slower progress being made by some pupils and taking swift action to address this
 - – ensuring that teachers use this information more effectively in day-to-day planning, marking and setting targets for pupils
 - – raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can be expected to do in lessons and over time
 - – developing the leadership team's current monitoring of teaching to focus more sharply on the quality of learning and progress made by groups and individual pupils in classes
 - – develop further teachers' skills in accurately assessing pupils' work, providing higher levels of challenge and more specific pointers for improvement, particularly in pupils' writing.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

Pupils' attainment in mathematics, reading and writing by the end of Key Stage 1 has been broadly average for the last three years and represents satisfactory progress from their starting points in Year 1. However, this masks some weaknesses in their reading and writing skills, and very few pupils reach the higher levels of attainment, particularly in these areas. This is reflected in the quality of pupils' writing across the school. Despite enjoying a range of interesting activities planned to develop their literacy skills, this enjoyment is not always translated into good progress when pupils are expected to write about their experiences. Activities during the recent Enterprise Week, enthused pupils in devising ways in which their class could make the most profit from the same starting point. Many were involved in decorating cakes or biscuits to sell to other pupils at break time, and working out the selling price. This provided opportunities to develop not only calculation skills but also their instructional writing and recount skills when reviewing the week's activities.

Some Key Stage 2 pupils enjoyed the calm ambience of the classroom during their writing time, with light from candles and gentle music playing. The weaker skills and independence of many pupils, however, meant that they struggled to make anything better than satisfactory progress. The school does not always ensure that pupils have appropriate levels of challenge and access to a range of key words and vocabulary prompts that are well matched to different levels of understanding and reading ability. Pupils feel safe and secure in school and have a good understanding of safety issues, including cycle and road safety and use of the internet. They know how to lead healthy lives and talk about the benefits of healthy food and exercise and the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drug misuse. Behaviour is good and the few pupils who find it

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difficult to manage their own behaviour are given good support so that it does not cause disruption to other pupils' learning. The school aims to raise pupils' aspirations of what they are capable of achieving, by teaching about careers and further education, although their basic skills satisfactorily prepare them for their future economic well-being. There are strengths in the pupils' confidence in and use of information and communications technology (ICT). Despite the school's best efforts to promote good attendance and punctuality, attendance figures are well below the national average for primary schools. This is affected by a very few persistent absentees having a large impact on the overall percentages in this relatively small school.

Pupils benefit from the school's keen focus on promoting their emotional and social development. They have a good sense of moral purpose and respond well to opportunities for spiritual reflection, such as in the regular assemblies. The curriculum also promotes their understanding of a range of beliefs and cultures that may be different to their own.

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	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

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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Teaching is good in many lessons, although this is not consistent over time across all areas of the school. Teachers' use of assessment to support learning is not yet fully developed to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Common features of teaching include the high quality of relationships between adults and pupils and the planning of a good range of activities that enliven lessons and motivate pupils to learn. When teaching is particularly good, these activities are also very well focused on pupils' specific needs and levels of ability, being carefully designed to move their learning on at a quicker rate. Most pupils do not lack confidence in their speaking skills in class or group discussions. Teachers are aware of the need to capitalise on this by challenging pupils to improve their vocabulary and demonstrate their understanding of what is being taught. Expectations of the content and presentation of pupils' work in books is variable and pupils often have only a vague idea of their targets for improvement, for example, in writing.

Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboard technology to enhance lessons, and ICT is incorporated across the curriculum, which is imaginatively planned and contributes to pupils' enjoyment of lessons. Pupils also enjoy lessons with additional teachers or instructors for music, physical education and French.

Arrangements for the care and guidance of all pupils, and in particular those who are potentially vulnerable and may be in most need of support, are very good. There are rigorous procedures in place to monitor attendance and early contact is made with families when there are concerns about this.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and assistant headteacher work well together, each with skills that complement the other to provide a balanced overview of the school's work. They have appropriate ambitions for the school, which are shared with staff, and a very good knowledge of the pupils and their emotional and personal development needs. The school's self-evaluation is mainly accurate, although it lacks sharpness in identifying exactly what needs to be done to accelerate the rate of progress in raising pupils' attainment. The school's decision to become involved in the local authority's Improving Schools programme is supporting leaders in their determination to develop the use of assessment across the school. Although a significant amount of data is kept on pupils' progress and attainment, it is not impacting strongly enough on day-to-day planning,

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differentiation and challenge to enable more rapid progress for all learners. Leaders undertake regular monitoring of teaching through lesson observations and scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' books. However, sometimes their evaluation of teaching can be overgenerous because it does not focus closely enough on the steps in progress made by all pupils during the lesson and over time.

Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities and play their part in challenging and supporting the school. They are developing a clear understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement and are keen to develop their skills further so that they can more fully hold leaders to account and evaluate the impact of the school's work on pupils' outcomes. Finances are well managed by the school and monitored by the governing body. Some aspects of its work, for example, partnership activities, provide good value for money because of their positive impact on the school's curriculum and pupils' enjoyment. Value for money is satisfactory overall, in line with pupils' outcomes.

Safeguarding procedures are good and all staff receive appropriate and up-to-date training. The headteacher takes the lead in promoting all aspects of pupils' safety and well-being and is well supported in this by the governing body and staff.

The school has completed an audit of its policy and provision for community cohesion and training has taken place, although this was some time ago and the school recognises the need to revisit this.

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	2
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

Many children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and

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understanding that are well below typical expectations. Most make good progress in many of their early learning goals, although their attainment is still below average when they enter Year 1. Adults support children well to encourage independent and collaborative learning, develop their social skills and build their confidence. For example, in a focused literacy session, the teacher's infectious enthusiasm fully engaged children in their topic about frogs so that all were keen to join in and share what they had learned so far about the life cycle of a frog. Planning gives due consideration to the needs of the children, whether in reception or Year 1, with appropriate resources to prompt them in choosing tasks that help to develop key skills. The children thoroughly enjoy activities such as those in the outdoor environment where they have plenty of opportunities for physical activity and role play. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader manages the provision well and is knowledgeable about the learning needs and welfare requirements for young children. She is aware of the potential for some children, who do not generally lack confidence, to work more independently on some tasks such as writing. Careful assessments and observations are used to track children's progress and inform the planning of future activities and next steps in learning. Transition arrangements are very good and enable children to settle in quickly, as most will have joined the class for regular sessions during the previous term when in the pre-school provision. Good information is provided for parents and carers, for example, in the school's good quality 'guide to phonics teaching' so that they can help their child at home.

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

The school regularly canvasses the views of parents and carers and staff are always willing to give of their time to discuss any questions or concerns that may arise throughout their child's time in the school. Of the 33 parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire, the overwhelming majority were very positive about all aspects of the school's work. Inspectors agree with most of these views, although inspection evidence shows that achievement is satisfactory and pupils are not always making as much progress as they could. Leaders understand that there is room to raise expectations further and challenge pupils to reach standards that are at least in line with national averages and in some cases above.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Garston Church of England 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 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 127 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	67	9	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	61	9	27	1	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	20	61	11	33	2	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	67	8	24	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	21	64	7	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	48	12	36	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	45	11	33	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)	17	52	10	30	2	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	58	12	36	1	3	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	61	11	33	0	0	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	67	9	27	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	97	1	3	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	88	2	6	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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.



02 July 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Garston Church of England Primary School, Liverpool, L19 5NS

Thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. Inspectors enjoyed spending time in lessons and talking to you about your learning. We found that although the school is satisfactory overall, some things are particularly good already, such as:

- you enjoy school and your lessons very much - it is a happy place and everyone gets on well together
- you help each other and contribute to your school and the local community well, for example in fundraising and taking on extra responsibilities
- the school helps you to understand how to keep yourself safe and looks after you very well so that you are safe when you're in school
- your behaviour is good. Even though some of you say that it is not good ALL the time, you know that adults take good care of you and those who need extra guidance with their behaviour get the help they need.

I have made some suggestions to your headteacher and staff so that they can help you reach better standards in your work, especially in your writing, by:

- making sure you have more challenging targets and know exactly what you need to do to improve your work
- checking more carefully where you may have gaps in your learning so that you can be helped with this and make faster progress in your literacy and numeracy

You can help by trying to take more responsibility for your learning without always waiting for help from the teachers, unless there's something you really don't understand. Get to know your targets and push yourself to reach them!

I wish you lots of success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs Marguerite McCloy

Her Majesty's Inspector

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