

Gloucester Road Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115585
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	338610
Inspection dates	1–2 December 2009
Reporting inspector	John Eadie

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Julie Cooper
Headteacher	Mrs Amanda Palmer
Date of previous school inspection	6 November 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons, and held meetings with the chair of governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at various papers, including the school development plan, policies and procedures relating to safeguarding and child protection, the school's data to show the progress pupils are making and management monitoring files. They also analysed pupils' and staff questionnaires and questionnaires returned by 10 parents.

This is a small primary school where a large majority of pupils are from a White British background. A growing number come from other heritages, particularly Polish, with a few from a variety of Asian backgrounds. Many of these do not speak English at home, though few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is almost double the national average. Both the proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those with statements of special educational need are higher than average. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual times is above average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is made in a Reception class. The school runs a breakfast club and provides accommodation for a privately run playgroup, which is inspected separately.

Information about the school

The school has travelled a long and successful journey since being put in special measures four years ago. Rigorous monitoring, accurate self-evaluation and a determination, shared by all staff, to improve provision and the progress that pupils make have led to this success. The school is firmly on the upward path and is well placed to continue to make improvements. There are now a number of strengths. Children have an outstanding start in the Reception class. They join the school with very limited skills and knowledge and make excellent progress in this class, but are still working at below average levels by the time they join Year 1.

A key improvement since the last inspection is that pupils' progress has improved. They are now making good progress from Year 1 to Year 6 and leave having reached broadly average standards. Because of the school's focus on raising standards in writing and improvements to the curriculum, standards are rising and have already improved considerably at the end of Year 2. This is now feeding through the school and standards have started to rise at the end of Year 6. The previous report noted that more-able pupils were not doing as well as they should. This has been addressed well and in the national assessments in Year 2 last year, the proportion gaining the higher levels was significantly above average. This also improved in the tests in Year 6, though not as consistently. The school has recognised that standards in mathematics are lagging a little behind those in other subjects and this is a current area for improvement.

Although teaching is good, some pupils say in their questionnaires that they do not always know how to improve their work. This is because there are occasions when teachers are not totally aware of what pupils have already learnt and are therefore

unable to give them clear guidance on what they need to learn next. Although targets are set, these are often too general and not matched specifically to pupils' individual needs.

Another considerable improvement is in the curriculum, which has been redesigned around a thematic approach. It is lively, interesting and relevant for the pupils. As one said, 'This school is exciting, because you never know what to expect when you arrive in the morning.' The themes chosen are integrated well into other subjects. For example, work was observed in two classes where the topics on the Tudors and the great fire of London were used well as a stimulus for learning in mathematics.

Standards of care, guidance and support are good, a particular strength being the way that the school goes beyond the call of duty to enable pupils who have significant barriers to their learning to play a full part in all school activities. For example, those who might potentially struggle to comply with school discipline are supported very well and parents are fully involved so that they succeed and make good progress. This commitment to equality of opportunity is also clear in the careful analysis of data to ensure that all groups are doing equally well. This analysis indicated that girls were not doing as well as boys. This has been addressed by providing extra support for some girls and all are now making similar progress. Provision for those with special educational needs is good. They are supported well so that they too make good progress.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The school has travelled a long and successful journey since being put in special measures four years ago. Rigorous monitoring, accurate self-evaluation and a determination, shared by all staff, to improve provision and the progress that pupils make have led to this success. The school is firmly on the upward path and is well placed to continue to make improvements. There are now a number of strengths. Children have an outstanding start in the Reception class. They join the school with very limited skills and knowledge and make excellent progress in this class, but are still working at below average levels by the time they join Year 1.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards and improve pupils' progress in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that teachers have a clear knowledge of pupils' previous learning so that they can take them on progressively
 - ensuring that tasks set in lessons are closely matched to the range of abilities in each class
 - ensuring that time is used to best effect so that pupils do not sit listening when either they do not understand or when they have already mastered the topic.
- Involve pupils more fully in the process of evaluating the success of their learning by:
 - ensuring that they know how well they are doing
 - setting them clear next steps in learning
 - ensuring that teachers make reference to these next steps when marking work
 - enabling pupils to monitor their progress in relation to these next steps
 - involving parents in this process.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' learning in lessons is good because they enjoy the interesting and engaging activities provided for them. For instance, pupils in the Year 3/4 class were fully engaged when the teacher and the teaching assistant read a poem in very different styles. Pupils were keen to voice their opinions on which they liked best and why. In the Year 1/2 class pupils were thrilled to know that the baker, in whose premises the great fire of London had broken out, was still alive, when a 'letter' from him was read out in a mathematics lesson, introducing a problem that he had with sorting his bread. The enthusiasm engendered made a good start to solving the problem. Pupils in Year 5/6 were fully involved when a DVD of a debate they had held the previous day was shown. This acted as a good stimulus to the day's learning. Those pupils who do not speak English at home play a full part in lessons and make the same progress as their classmates.

The school has worked hard and successfully to improve attendance and it is now broadly average. Pupils are well-behaved and proud of their school. They say that they feel safe and that the rare instances of bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively by staff. This was confirmed by parents, who were impressed with how quickly the school

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reacts to any problems. Pupils take on responsibilities well, such as acting as playground pals or running the healthy tuck shop. The next step in improving pupils' personal qualities is to make them more self-aware and conscious of the needs of others. Pupils take plenty of activity and the queue at the healthy tuck shop and the good take-up of healthy school meals indicate pupils' good adoption of healthy lifestyles. They are quickly improving their grasp of basic skills and apply these well in a range of subjects. This and their work ethic are preparing them well for their futures. They are inquisitive about the world around them and understand their place in society and their responsibilities towards it well.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make good use of resources, including computers and their interactive whiteboards, to make their lessons more interesting. For instance, to engage younger pupils in their reading, the teacher planned for them to read to hand puppets. There are a good number of teaching assistants and volunteers and they support learning well by taking groups on their own as well as supporting in class. This small-group work enables

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' needs to be met more fully. The school identifies those in danger of falling behind and has put in place effective measures to help them catch up. There are sound procedures for recording regularly the levels pupils have reached in order to gauge their progress. However, teachers are not always fully aware of what skills pupils have already mastered, particularly in mathematics, and are therefore unsure of how to give pupils accurate feedback on what they need to learn next. This also means that tasks set in mathematics lessons are not matched accurately to pupils' differing abilities and that pupils sometimes sit listening when they could be more profitably engaged getting on with these tasks. Teachers' marking, while being encouraging, does not always show pupils how to improve their work.

One of the major strengths of the school is the pastoral care. All adults know the pupils and their circumstances well and put in considerable effort to ensure that they are safe and well cared for. Families appreciate this support and the care and support that are extended to the whole family. Outside expertise is used well to provide additional support and guidance for individual needs.

A strength of the curriculum is the range of extra opportunities that are provided. Pupils regularly go on visits or welcome visitors who provide good, first-hand learning experiences. Good use is made of links with other schools. For example, a specialist from a local secondary school teaches French. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Very clear plans are made for their learning and they are supported well. Data on their progress are analysed carefully and show that they are making good progress. Those who do not speak English at home are supported by a specialist teacher and are quickly enabled to enjoy the full curriculum.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
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's drive for improvement has been communicated well to all staff, who share her determination to continue this. There is an air of corporate responsibility permeating the school. This is shared by governors and governance has improved significantly since the last inspection. They now take a strategic view and have strengthened their body with extra expertise. They support and challenge well. However, both they and the school's leaders recognise that there is work to be done in promoting community cohesion. Whereas there is good knowledge of the local community, this has not been extended into actions or sufficient involvement.

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All staff and governors share a good commitment to equality of opportunity, demonstrated in the provision made for those who do not speak English at home and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It is also demonstrated in the effective actions taken when underperformance of girls was noted.

The school has worked hard to involve parents in the education of their children, putting on a range of events and meetings to help them. The increasing attendance at these meetings indicates the success of this initiative. At the time of the inspection, all safeguarding procedures were robust and fully in place. Health and safety measures are very thorough, with risk assessments routinely being carried out for all areas of the school and all activities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make outstanding progress in the Reception class. This is because of the excellent provision made for them. Opportunities are constantly being taken to enhance their learning and particularly to extend their language skills. For instance, children were taken out to explore the frosty day and were being encouraged to talk about their discoveries. They found the frozen water tray and there was considerable excitement as they picked up pieces of ice. The language that resulted, 'feathery' and 'hairy' for example, was imaginative and one child noticed that some of the pieces were shaped like triangles. This development is due to effective questioning by all adults. This was most noted when a child, who does not speak English at home, stated 'It is too cold and I don't like this!' An adult asked why and supported the child's language skills extremely well, modelling a range of words he could use.

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There is a very good balance between activities led by an adult and those children choose for themselves. During the latter, adults have the expertise to stand back at appropriate times to let the children find out and learn for themselves. Children behave and share toys and other resources well. They play happily together and are developing good social skills. Children are well aware of the need to stay safe, one child telling an inspector, 'You can't run in our school!' The setting is led extremely well and all adults are continually striving to improve provision even further. Parents are fully involved and are already beginning to contribute to their children's 'learning journeys'.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Few parents returned their questionnaires, though all those who did and those spoken to were totally positive about the school. A number made comments indicating their reasons, such as, 'We feel the school goes the extra mile as they give our children the extra time and support they need'; 'School always keeps us informed, even when it's not bad!' and 'My child can't wait for the weekend to be over to get back to school.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gloucester Road 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 10 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 102 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	9	90	1	10	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	6	60	4	40	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	90	1	10	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	9	90	1	10	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	90	1	10	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	9	90	1	10	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	60	4	40	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	7	70	3	30	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	8	80	2	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	9	90	1	10	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.



3 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gloucester Road Primary School, Cheltenham, GL51 8PB

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school when we visited recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and hearing you tell us how much you enjoy school. It was good to hear you say that it is fun and exciting because you 'never know what to expect when you arrive in the morning'. The main reason for this is that your headteacher and teachers have planned a really interesting set of things for you to learn and teachers often make their lessons out of the ordinary. Your school is improving well and is now good.

Those of you in Reception are making excellent progress because the adults in that class know exactly how to help you learn, and provide all the right sort of opportunities to do this. Those of you in the rest of the school are making good progress as you are being taught well. All adults look after you very well and you told us that you feel safe in school. You behave well and are developing into responsible young people. However, some of you do not attend school as regularly as you should.

There are two things which we have suggested your headteacher and teachers should work at to improve the school still further.

- The standard of your work in mathematics is not as good as in other subjects. We have suggested that teachers need to make sure that you always receive work that matches your abilities and that you do not spend too long sitting and listening in lessons, but have more time to work at your different activities.
- In your questionnaires, several of you said that you do not always know how well you are doing. We agree and have suggested that teachers need to give you better information about this and set you very precise targets to help you improve your work.

I know you will help by continuing to work hard and do your best.

Yours sincerely

John D Eadie

Lead inspector

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