

Gardners Lane Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131249
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	354510
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2010
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Stephen Eldridge
Headteacher	Charles Welsh
Date of previous school inspection	13 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 15 lessons involving the work of 10 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and governors. The inspectors evaluated the school's work, and looked at school self-evaluation documents, external monitoring reports and development planning. Fifty questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed as well as those from school staff and the pupils.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work. They looked in detail at the following:

- the progress of girls and whether it is similar to that of the boys
- provision for higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs and its influence on their progress
- the promotion of effective partnerships with people in other parts of the United Kingdom and overseas

Information about the school

Gardners Lane Primary School is a little smaller than most primary schools. The majority of the pupils are White British. Pupils from Asian backgrounds account for about 10% of the pupils, with most of these from Bangladeshi families. An above average proportion speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is about twice the national average. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above average.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in Reception. Since the 2007 inspection, the governing body has taken over the management of the children's centre. This includes the nursery which has 80 places for children from birth to five years old. The nursery provision within the children's centre was inspected by the team.

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

1

Main findings

Gardners Lane Primary is a good school. There are a number of significant strengths, not least the ambition and drive of all staff and the governors. Considerable improvement has been made since the inspection in 2007. The school is at the forefront of local initiatives to develop a federation of schools and children's centres to serve the interests of families in the area. The partnerships with other agencies and groups are first class features of this increasingly successful school. There is outstanding capacity to maintain improvement. Everyone is focused on creating excellence.

Pupils make good overall progress from their very low starting points. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been welded together so that children make outstanding progress in Nursery and Reception. Consistently good progress is made across Years 1 to 6. Observations in lessons and the study of pupils' books show that year by year, pupils build skills and knowledge at a good rate. By the time they leave Year 6 attainment is average in English and not far below in mathematics and science. Achievement in art, drama, music and sport is good.

Central to the work of the school is the promotion of pupils' personal development. Much success is achieved because the quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding, whether for very young children or the oldest pupils. All behave well, relationships are very good, great enjoyment of school is obvious and pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep fit and healthy.

Teaching is improving in quality and is good. There is evidence of some outstanding teaching, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Lessons are fun and interesting according to the pupils. Teachers have good expertise and know the needs of their pupils well. The use of assessment to support learning is good and further developments are planned, for instance by creating a full dialogue about improvements to the work between pupils and also with their teachers, both orally and in writing. The curriculum is good and shows an improved focus on the lives of people in this country and across the world.

The school ensures pupils have equal opportunities to do well. Girls make as brisk progress as the boys. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. The higher attainers generally work on tasks that challenge their thinking, so they make rapid progress. The school and children's centre are hubs of the local community which enable parents and carers to make effective contacts with other agencies and groups. As a result, partnerships with parents, carers and external agencies are outstanding. Parents and carers comment very positively on such links. Leadership and management of the school are effective in ensuring the safety, security and well-being of all pupils.

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The leadership team know their school well and make accurate judgements about its quality.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the opportunities for pupils to talk together in lessons about their work and to write responses in their books to teachers' comments about the progress they are making.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The school has increasing success in giving all pupils a good start to their education so that they can make good progress. Staff are particularly effective in reducing barriers to learning, starting with the very youngest children. The pupils want to do well and work hard. Their books show they complete a good amount of work across the year, with neat handwriting and accurate spelling.

Since many children start with limited skills in language and literacy, promoting good achievement in English is a cornerstone of the school's work. It is in this subject that the school has most success; pupils speak confidently and fluently, write expressively and read accurately in lessons. Such skills are also shown by pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils from Asian backgrounds, who form the largest minority ethnic group, make good progress. Many reach levels that are higher than pupils from similar backgrounds in other primary schools. Senior leaders are working effectively to build comparable skills in mathematics and science. They realise this will help build outstanding overall progress. A current focus is to reduce the number of worksheets used in science in order to provide even greater challenge for the higher attainers.

Pupils' very noticeable enjoyment of school is reflected in their punctuality and eagerness to start work each day. After assembly the 'Wake and Shake' sessions set the tone for the day's work, with enthusiastic responses, energetic and cooperative working. Pupils are polite and thoughtful of others. They take a pride in their own achievement and that of others. Regardless of age, the pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education, as observed when Year 6 pupils worked together to create an advertising jingle for the 'Sneeze Safe' theme. They did this confidently and in a mature and sensible way.

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.

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

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	1
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?

Lessons typically go at a brisk pace, include many opportunities for pupils to work practically together and make very effective use of the excellent resources in school. Occasionally, the teacher talks for too long and in some lessons there are insufficient chances for the pupils to think and talk about how well they are learning. Nevertheless, lessons are well taught and pupils leave them ready to return the next day to continue the work. The teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and are especially successful in helping those with barriers to learning or special educational needs to make good progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are supported well and also progress well, as acknowledged by their parents and carers.

The curriculum is centred appropriately on the development of basic skills in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. The evidence from pupils' work indicates the success of features to promote good progress such as the 'I can do' self-assessment sentences written by pupils in mathematics. There is firm focus on the work of gifted and talented pupils and their good progress is supported by a very strong partnership with a local grammar school. School leaders are working well to capitalise on such links to ensure the higher attainers always reach their potential.

Parents and carers identify the school's caring ethos as its prime asset. Nothing is too difficult for the staff in supporting the needs of pupils and their families. Pupils talk enthusiastically about always having at least one adult in school to turn to if they are worried or troubled.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</p> <p>Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms</p>	
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<p>The quality of teaching</p> <p>Taking into account:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">The use of assessment to support learning</p>	2
	2
<p>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</p>	2
<p>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</p>	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The prime objectives of the school are very clear. The headteacher talks passionately about the mission of the school to support families as well as possible so that their children have equality of opportunity. This mission is met with success. The school is a very harmonious community where there is zero toleration of discrimination.

The headteacher leads the school with a quiet authority that is respected by staff, governors, parents and carers and the pupils. Senior staff take their lead from the headteacher. They have developed effective systems to check and evaluate the school's work and to track pupils' progress. Support to help improve progress is provided quickly if achievement slows. The priorities for school improvement are an accurate reflection of the school's emerging effectiveness.

The governing body undertakes its responsibilities effectively. It has ensured that the safeguarding of pupils is good. It recognises that to make safeguarding outstanding, the supporting records could be more detailed. Governors delve regularly into the work of the school and make appropriate suggestions for how it can be improved. They do this in a supportive way. The promotion of community cohesion is good, especially with the local community, where the school's extremely effective work enables families to make contact with a wide range of support groups and support their children's learning successfully. At present, governors are working with staff to strengthen pupils' direct links with other people outside the local area, including across the world.

The decision to take on the management of the children's centre is enabling the school to extend its support for families and their children. Staff and governors know well what to work on in order to bring outstanding effectiveness to all parts of the school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

<p>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</p> <p>Taking into account:</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">The leadership and management of teaching and learning</p>	1
	2
<p>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</p>	2
<p>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</p>	1
<p>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</p>	1

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	
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is shared most effectively by school staff and the nursery staff in the children's centre. Leadership and management are in expert hands and the conditions of registration for the nursery within the children's centre are all met. Nursery and Reception children share the same exceptionally good offerings through the stimulating and exciting curriculum and high quality of teaching. From their earliest days at Gardners Lane, the children flourish. Babies under a year old benefit because their parents and carers grow in confidence to help them learn. Children aged two to three overcome their uncertainties to join in and have fun. This was very apparent in one session where two newcomers sat for a moment watching the others dance with joy and then plucked up courage to take part. Smiles and laughter were frequent.

Children are confident and happy and readily make choices about what they want to do. Nursery children whooped with joy as they took their shoes off before entering the 'soft room'. Three boys promptly dived into the ball pit and 'swam' to the other side. Three girls romped on the seesaw. This sort of experience to promote children's physical and social development is found throughout the day. The same sort of choices are made in Reception. Here, the children really enjoyed pulling cards with food pictures out of the 'snake' and they read the labels accurately, breaking down and then blending the sounds to make the word.

The welfare needs of all children are all met fully which enables them to make rapid progress. Whilst the starting level of skills in the Nursery is very low, the children make great gains and by the time they leave Reception, many have reached their targets. In the past, few have exceeded typical expectations although the excellent start now in place is helping raise the number of children who go beyond the expected point.

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

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Views of parents and carers

All but one or two parents and carers hold positive views of the school, as shown by their responses to the questionnaires. Only five wrote comments, mostly supportive. It is clear that commonly held views include the fact that the school has 'put my children in good stead for the future' and that 'if I had more children I would send them to this school'. The very few who wrote about their concerns raised individual matters, so there was not a common theme. Inspectors' judgements match those of the vast majority of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gardners Lane 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 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 187 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	36	72	12	24	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	84	7	14	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	64	18	36	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	68	16	32	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	38	76	11	22	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	64	17	34	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	62	17	34	2	4	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)	33	66	16	32	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	32	64	16	32	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	52	22	44	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	52	23	46	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	33	66	17	34	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	78	11	22	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). 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.



14 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gardners Lane Primary School, Cheltenham GL51 9JW

We think that your 'Wake and Shake' sessions showed exactly why you enjoy school so much. You had great fun, worked energetically and sensibly in these sessions and set off for your lessons determined to do well. This determination is the reason for the good progress you make. As we moved around your school we found a lot of good things to report on. As we moved around your school we found a lot of good things to report on.

- In lessons we saw that you worked hard and made good progress because you are well taught.
- We watched children in Nursery and Reception having fun and great enjoyment learning as they play.
- When we looked at your books we found that you are reaching the expected standards in English. You are not far behind that in mathematics and science.
- In our talks with you we discovered you know a lot about how to keep healthy. You also said how much you enjoy school.
- We discovered that all the adults in school work really hard to look after you and keep you safe
- In talking to the adults and watching you learn we realised that your school works excellently with your parents and carers and other people.
- We were impressed with the way that your headteacher, staff and governors are working to make your school even better.

Our report includes many other good things and one main area for improvement.

- There are times when you are asked to talk about how well you are learning. Your teachers could encourage this more often and we think you would find it helpful to write about this in your books.

To help your teachers make these improvements you could share with them what you find easy and what is harder in lessons. You could tell your parents and carers as well.

Yours sincerely

David Carrington

Lead inspector

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