

Gainford CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114222
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	357497
Inspection dates	15–16 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Kate Pringle

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	90
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andie McKay
Headteacher	Mr Howard Blindt
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eight lessons were observed and five teachers were seen teaching. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, assessment information, policies and procedures, school development plans and updates of pupils' progress. Views of stakeholders in the school were also considered through questionnaire responses from 33 parents and carers, 10 staff and 49 pupils.

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

- How effectively leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage impacts upon the quality of provision and improving outcomes for children.
- The impact of strategies to improve provision and on attainment and progress, especially in mathematics.
- How effectively all teachers challenge the needs of pupils of differing abilities.
- How effectively all leaders and managers identify areas for development and successfully implement measures to improve outcomes for pupils.

Information about the school

This is a small school which serves the local community and families from surrounding areas who choose the school for its faith status. Nearly all pupils are White British and none speaks English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than that found nationally and no pupil has a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is considerably lower than the national average. The current level of mobility is higher than that found nationally.

The school holds a number of awards, including Healthy School status, Artsmark silver, Activemark, Becta ICT excellence, Financial Management Systems in Schools, Investing in Children and the Eco schools silver.

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

Extremely caring relationships are at the heart of this warm and welcoming, good school. This is demonstrated in the responses of parents and carers, a large majority of whom believe that the school values and promotes the development of the whole child. One parental comment, reflective of others, notes that the school is 'excellent at welcoming children to learning creating an atmosphere which promotes confidence and individual abilities'. Wide-ranging learning opportunities provide pupils with experiences which engage their interest and, as a result, they enjoy coming to school. The outstanding development of pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural knowledge and understanding contributes highly to pupils' excellent understanding of others and of right and wrong. Similarly, pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy, using their knowledge to the benefit of themselves and others.

From entry points largely in line with those expected for their age, pupils leave Year 6 with standards above the national average. Overall, good teaching motivates pupils to learn well, although there is some variability between subjects at different stages, notably writing in Key Stage 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2. Regular tracking of progress assures teachers' good understanding of pupils' attainment. Strategies to improve writing and mathematics are showing success. However, although the quality of assessment is good overall, some relative weaknesses in its use to promote higher standards in writing in Key Stage 1 and better attainment in mathematics in Key Stage 2 limit the challenge for pupils in these areas. Care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those whose circumstances have made them vulnerable, are very quickly identified and a range of appropriate strategies and support rapidly engage these pupils to ensure that they progress well. Good links with parents and carers and outside agencies play a considerable part in engaging these pupils enabling them to achieve as well as their peers.

The headteacher is very well supported by the staff who are wholly committed to the ethos of the school. Self-evaluation is accurate and all leaders have a clear view of the strengths of the school and the areas for improvement. Effective actions have developed cross-curricular learning, improved attendance, enhanced provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and increased extended services for pupils. All these indicate a good capacity for the school to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Ensure that assessment is used more effectively to better match tasks to the needs of Key Stage 1 pupils in writing and Key Stage 2 pupils in mathematics, in order to accelerate progress and raise attainment in these areas.

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

Pupils are well motivated and have good attitudes to learning. Pupils' good behaviour is reflective of the positive relationships they have with their teachers. Speaking and listening skills are high and these ensure pupils good progress in all aspects of learning. Activities which involve pupils in using their imagination and creativity, afford pupils with good opportunities to reflect and consider how to apply their developing skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT).

Small numbers in cohorts and the above average mobility impact strongly upon overall attainment and progress. However, having entered the Reception class with broadly expected skills, the progress that pupils make through the school is good overall. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment demonstrates that teachers continue to build effectively on the good progress made in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Most recent Key Stage 1 data indicate above average attainment in mathematics and reading, but below average attainment in writing. By the time pupils leave Year 6, their attainment in English is high, far exceeding national averages. Although the past decline in mathematics has been reversed and attainment is now average, standards remain lower than those in English. Overall, pupils achieve well and enjoy learning.

Pupils demonstrate considerable confidence in their abilities, which is reflected through conversations with inspectors about the experiences the school offers them to help them to develop as individuals. Pupils are adamant there is no bullying and say that behaviour is good. They speak fluently about how effectively experiences and opportunities, which extend their skills and knowledge, enable them to make informed choices about their lifestyle. There is an excellent take-up of school meals. Pupils grow their own vegetables and the majority take part in a good range of physical and aesthetic activity, through sport and the creative arts. Pupils are very aware of potential danger: a group recently carried out their own survey about possible safety concerns and how they wanted these resolved. They clearly articulate how to assure their safety, for instance, when using the internet. Pupils' keen involvement in business enterprise stimulates older pupils very effectively, who then utilise their newly acquired skills to produce high quality merchandise, for example, 'Minty Monkeys,' a mint plant growing kit. Pupils are enthusiastic about their enjoyment of school and their attendance is good. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures. They understand their responsibilities in society and have many opportunities to reflect upon how to improve their school, their local community and to support others less fortunate than themselves internationally.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	1
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is generally good. In the best lessons, good use is made of subject knowledge and skills to engage pupils in learning. Interactive whiteboards are used very effectively to model learning strategies and to advance pupils' ICT skills. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils to help them understand the purpose of the lesson, and mainly rigorous assessment identifies the progress pupils make. However, not all teachers use this information consistently to ensure that pupils are sufficiently challenged. This can limit overall progress as activities do not always match pupils' needs closely enough, for example, in writing in Key Stage 1 and mathematics in Key Stage 2. Marking of books is regularly completed and affirms whether pupils have achieved the learning objective.

The rich curriculum provides pupils with exciting experiences, amply supported by a range of visits and visitors. Recent developments now link different subjects together, resulting in a heightening of pupils' motivation to learn. There are good opportunities to use reading, writing and mathematical skills in other areas of learning. The ICT curriculum is excellent, with pupils having particular expertise in their manipulation of different programs by the time they leave the school. Additional activities, in partnership with other providers, extend pupils' learning opportunities. A large proportion of pupils learn about ecosystems, speak a modern foreign language or play the violin. Residential visits to outdoor activity centres, and abroad, offer different learning experiences for

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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older pupils, enhancing their confidence and self-esteem as they face challenging activities and situations.

The strongly inclusive ethos is extremely evident and is reflected in the highly positive feelings pupils have of the understanding of their needs by all staff. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are rapidly identified and the school is particularly successful in involving these pupils in all aspects of school life. The parent support adviser works extremely successfully with families and outside agencies, ensuring effective cooperation. Strategies are highly focused, underpinning individual learning programmes and interventions to ensure that all pupils make progress equal to that of others. Links with other partners are highly effective. For example, there are very successful induction and transition arrangements with other providers to ensure that pupils settle quickly and transfer with confidence at different stages in their learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and staff are held in high regard by parents, carers and other stakeholders, who recognise a school in which the development of the whole child is central to all of its work. Academic targets are challenging and the school provides good professional development to successfully support teachers who require particular training in order to improve outcomes for pupils. Self-evaluation successfully identifies what the school does well and where it needs to improve. Successful development plans pinpoint areas of action and ongoing reviews evaluate the impact of these actions and determine the next steps. For example, as a result of recent actions, the downturn in mathematics has been reversed and attendance has improved from average and is now high.

The governing body actively challenges the school and holds staff to account. It fully understands the school's strengths and carefully monitors areas of improvement through its individual responsibilities. Statutory requirements are very well addressed, especially with regard to safeguarding and security. Communication with parents and carers and with outside agencies is good, its quality being reflected in parents' and carers' responses and by the successful support of individual needy pupils. The monitoring and evaluation of developing links with different communities have progressed very well. Building upon excellent relationships with the local community, the school realised the

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limitations of working in a mainly White British culture and has developed links with a regional multicultural school and one abroad. This, together with other successful initiatives, evidences good value for money.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter the Reception class with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Good relationships with teachers are evident as children have very quickly settled into this safe and secure environment. Even at this early stage in the year, children are confident and happy as they work together making choices of where and with whom to play. Simple rules are taught and children learn well how to keep safe and healthy, and follow the daily routines. The needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are quickly determined and appropriate planning ensures that children have activities that match their individual needs closely. The quality of assessment is improved and adult's keen observations of children's development enable the staff to effectively plan children's next steps in learning. Over the past three years, children's attainment has steadily risen, indicating good improvement in provision. Overall, children make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1, their skills are above average. Children's enjoyment is obvious and is reflected in parents and carers comments that praise the staff for the care and attention they provide.

Although relatively new to the role, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader has already instigated a number of developments to improve provision. For example, activities in the outdoor area, a successful phonics programme, dedicated areas for music and investigative play, all contribute to the overall good outcomes for children. Policies and

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procedures are well established and contribute successfully to the security of the setting and to children's welfare. Leadership and management of the setting are good.

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

A very large majority of parents and carers are extremely positive about the school and hold the headteacher and staff in high regard. They appreciate the care and support given to their children and are confident that concerns will be listened to and acted upon appropriately. The few concerns raised were fully investigated. No serious issues were raised by parents and carers. Inspectors agree with the views 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 Gainford CofE 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 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 90 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	21	72	7	24	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	66	9	31	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	9	31	18	62	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	38	14	48	1	3	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	9	31	17	59	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	11	38	15	52	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	62	9	31	1	3	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)	10	34	16	55	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	41	14	48	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	41	13	45	2	7	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	34	16	55	2	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	13	45	14	48	1	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	52	12	41	1	3	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



17 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gainford CofE Primary School, Darlington, DL2 3DR

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave the inspectors when we inspected your school recently. We know that you really enjoy school and that you have good relationships with your teachers. You behave well and we saw how much you were interested in your lessons and wanted to learn. You listen well and work hard. Your teachers care for you very well and make sure that there is someone there to help you. This means that you feel extremely safe and because of this you concentrate well on your work and you make good progress.

Your rich curriculum provides you with lots of exciting experiences. You have excellent links with your local community and you have great opportunities to visit places and meet a variety of people from different backgrounds and cultures. Your excellent understanding of right and wrong helps you to reflect upon the choices you make and the consequences of your actions. Your understanding of how to keep safe and to be healthy is outstanding. You share this with others by helping them to choose what to eat and how to be physically active.

Yours is a good school with some things outstanding, but we have asked your teachers to challenge those of you in Key Stage 1 in your writing and for those of you in Key Stage 2 in mathematics, so that you do as well in these subjects as you do in your other work.

We wish you all the very best of luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kate Pringle

Lead inspector

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