

Gastrells Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	115573
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	379102
Inspection dates	30 April – 1 May 2012
Lead inspector	Peter Clifton

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	166
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amanda Baker–Dibley
Headteacher	Katie Merriman
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2009
School address	Kingscourt Lane Stroud GL5 3PS
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Peter Clifton

Additional inspector

Eileen Chadwick

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 19 lessons and observed seven teachers. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils. The inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school improvement plan, the school's information on pupils' progress, samples of pupils' work and information sent home to parents and carers. The responses to 64 questionnaires from parents and carers, 20 responses from staff and 85 pupil responses were examined and analysed.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average size primary school with pupils attending mainly from the local area. There are six classes, including mixed-age classes in Key Stage 2. Classes have been reorganised since the time of the previous inspection and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and those in Years 1 and 2, are now taught as separate year groups. There is specially resourced provision for pupils with special educational needs in a communication and interaction centre (CIC) where seven pupils receive support for their communication needs. These pupils join mainstream classes for a range of activities. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs outside the CIC is broadly average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school meets the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school has gained the International School 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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. Pupils are known well by staff and treated as individuals. Standards attained in writing have improved since the previous inspection. The school is not yet outstanding because pupils are not making even more rapid and sustained progress and the teaching is not yet outstanding.
- Standards of attainment by the time pupils leave school are above average. Pupils’ achievement and progress are good and strengthening. Classroom initiatives to help pupils write in different styles using complex sentences, daily reading sessions and problem-solving activities in mathematics, together with a comprehensive programme of individual support for pupils, contribute to their good achievement. Pupils supported in the CIC achieve well.
- Teaching is good, and often of high quality for all pupils, including those supported in the CIC. Teachers typically ensure that learning moves along at a brisk pace. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows, when introductions are too long or when teachers talk too much. Relationships are strong across the school. Activities are mostly challenging and often promote high levels of interest and enjoyment. Strategies to help the pupils to assess how well they are doing and to set personal goals are underdeveloped.
- Pupils’ behaviour is good and disruption to lessons is unusual. Pupils are polite ambassadors for the school. Cooperative and independent working is strong in all classes when the opportunity is provided. Pupils with communication difficulties are valued members of the school community and behave well. Pupils are well looked after and feel safe in school.
- The leadership of teaching and the management of performance are good, including that of the CIC. Monitoring of teaching is robust, and improvement is embraced by staff. Pupils’ progress is comprehensively tracked and additional support accurately targeted. The curriculum provides many rich, enjoyable and memorable experiences.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding so that pupils make more rapid and sustained progress by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to make decisions and participate actively in their learning
 - ensuring that introductions to lessons and explanations are not overlong
 - developing classroom strategies to enable pupils to gain in-depth insight into what they need to do to improve.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Lessons observed and pupils' work seen confirm that pupils make good progress across the school. Progress in Key Stage 2 is particularly strong. Inspection findings are endorsed by nearly all parents and carers who think that their children make good progress and are effectively helped to develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics.

Children start school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are typically in line with those expected for their age. Attainment on entry to Year 1 is rising because of improvements to teaching and the way in which letter sounds are taught. The current Reception children are working at levels above those expected for their age, with many children developing good writing skills. They were seen to count confidently, write number sequences and program toys to move in different directions.

In the CIC, pupils make good progress towards the objectives in their individual education plans, which provide detailed information about what they need to do to improve. Some have made accelerated progress in writing because of the high quality of support provided. Speaking and listening are successfully promoted, for example, when pupils play games together or do number activities on the electronic whiteboard.

Attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 is broadly average and rising. There are increasing numbers of pupils working at expected or higher levels compared to those nationally. By the end of Year 6, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. The school has successfully fostered a good deal of enjoyment in reading. There are many examples of pupils writing in different styles linked to their topic work. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, considered ways to improve the effectiveness of complex sentences in persuasive writing and pupils in Years 3 and 4 used scientific vocabulary to describe the development of caterpillars. Less-able pupils and those who are disabled and have special educational needs observed their caterpillars carefully and made a good contribution through discussion. In

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mathematics, pupils use calculation skills confidently to solve problems and a high proportion of them are working at above expected levels. Years 5 and 6 pupils, for example, used maps and their knowledge of ratio to work out different possible routes for a marathon run.

Individual support and small-group work are carefully targeted and skilfully led. While additional support is often provided for less-able pupils and those who are disabled and have special educational needs outside the CIC, it also assists more-able pupils. These different groups of pupils make good progress and achieve equally well. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology (ICT), art and design and technology is above average.

Quality of teaching

Teachers are particularly successful in motivating pupils to engage in different activities and make, at least, good progress. Interesting ideas are explored in well-chosen topics. A discussion in Years 5 and 6 about whether disabled people should compete in the main Olympic events generated much high quality persuasive writing. On several occasions during the inspection, teachers demonstrated high levels of subject expertise to help pupils develop their thinking, including the teaching of letters and their sounds. Adults successfully encourage cooperation, fairness and respect to effectively promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Time is given for the pupils to develop creative ideas, particularly in art, craft and design. Inspectors' findings on the quality of teaching were endorsed in the questionnaires; all pupils responded that teaching was good; their parents and carers rightly agree with these views.

Teaching in Reception and provides children with excellent strategies to decode and write simple words. Building on this good start, guided reading sessions in Year 1, for example, are used well to explore pupils' understanding of text. Lower-attaining pupils are heard to read more frequently than other pupils in order to boost their skills. Pupils who are disabled and those with special educational needs are taught well because teachers plan well and additional help is provided when necessary. In the CIC, adults know the pupils very well and teaching is carefully based on the needs of individual pupils. This means that provision consistently meets pupils' social and academic needs.

While planning typically meets the wide range of needs of pupils, there are a few occasions when learning slows. Examples of these include overlong explanations by the teacher or when adults dominate discussions. This limits the pupils' active participation in lessons and inhibits their decision making. Marking in English is purposeful, acknowledging achievement and setting goals for improvement. There are some good examples of pupils assessing their work, identifying strengths and what they could do better. Nevertheless, they are not helped enough to decide for themselves what could be improved to help them move on to the next level. Several pupils indicated in the questionnaires that they do not always know how well they are doing.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Around the school, pupils are courteous and polite, and older pupils express pride in their work. They demonstrate highly positive attitudes to learning, for example, when discussing their art, design and technology work linked to the topic on Egypt. The engagement of pupils in lessons observed was never less than good and sometimes outstanding.

Pupils endorsed inspectors' findings that behaviour is typically good over time; they commented that behaviour in lessons is nearly always good and that they learnt a lot. Most parents agree with these views. On the very few occasions when pupils do not behave as well as they should, they are managed well by adults. Pupils say they love the playground equipment and older pupils help to organise games at lunchtimes. When asked about bullying, a few pupils indicated in the questionnaires that it sometimes occurred. Discussion with individuals and groups of pupils confirmed that there was 'virtually no bullying' and that they felt very safe in school. They are aware of the various types of bullying, including through the use of computers or mobile telephones.

The school is a very harmonious community. Rewards and sanctions are understood by pupils and there is a culture of celebrating achievement and rewarding effort, for example through merit badges in assembly. Attendance is above average.

Leadership and management

The headteacher rightly has the confidence of staff and the governing body to drive improvement. She communicates high expectations and considerable ambition to improve teaching and pupils' achievement. Subject leadership is good, including in the CIC. Efforts to improve the school's effectiveness have been concerted and well targeted. Leaders' and managers' efforts have consolidated good aspects of the school since the previous inspection as well as firmly tackling areas for development. Sustained good progress, improved attainment, pupils' positive behaviour and attitudes to learning and good teaching demonstrate the school's clear capacity to improve further. Classroom initiatives to improve writing skills have been embraced by staff and have helped to raise attainment in writing. Greater rigour in the way assessment information is used to check the progress of groups and individual pupils has enabled leaders to take swift action to prevent anyone from falling behind. Records tracking progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in the CIC are thorough. Close analysis of data on pupils' progress leads to swift action if any gaps between the progress of groups appear; provision is well directed to secure equal opportunity for pupils.

The governing body supports and challenges leaders well. Members have a good understanding of pupils' attainment and rates of progress. They use this information, for example, to support the reorganisation of some classes. Regular visits to the

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school provide them with first-hand knowledge about what happens in lessons. They have a clear understanding of their responsibility for safeguarding and arrangements to promote this are comprehensive. Statutory safeguarding requirements are met.

The headteacher regularly monitors teaching to effectively support teachers' professional development. Links with local schools are exploited well to promote an understanding among staff about what constitutes good and better teaching. Teachers are given opportunities to visit other schools to help them reflect on their own practice.

Curriculum planning covers a range of stimulating activities in different subjects. Links between subjects are exploited well to extend skills. In art lessons, pupils are taught how to create different effects and encouraged to explore and experiment with their own ideas. Pupils are encouraged to express different views, to argue from different perspectives and listen respectfully to each other. Their awareness of different faiths and cultures is promoted well through links with schools in the United Kingdom and Germany. This stimulating provision contributes effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which is further evident in their confidence and very positive relationships in school.

Parents comment about how the leaders have gone out of their way to provide additional personal support for their children. They are rightly complimentary about how well integration is managed for the pupils in the CIC.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



2 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gastrells Community Primary School, Stroud GL5 3PS

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly to us when we visited your school and for your responses to the questionnaire. Gastrell School provides you with a good education. Your headteacher and others have made improvements since the time you were last visited by inspectors. These changes have helped you to improve your reading and writing. Your headteacher and other staff have a clear understanding about what needs to be done to make further improvements.

We visited quite a few of your lessons and were pleased with how well you get on with your teachers and the headteacher. We were also very impressed with how well you worked with each other in your groups, concentrating hard on your work. This is helping you to learn and achieve well. However, there are times when your learning is slower, for example, when introductions to lessons are too long or your teachers talk for too long. We have asked your headteacher to make sure that this does not happen in the future. Another thing your teachers can do to help you make better progress is to make sure that you are given better information so that you can judge for yourselves how well you are doing.

We much enjoyed looking at your work on display, particularly the art, craft and design and technology, and some of your lively writing. You are rightly very proud of this.

You get on well together and we agree that behaviour is good. Nearly all of you attend school well and on time. Your headteacher, governing body and all the teachers are keen to help your school improve. You can help by continuing to get to school on time and always doing your best work in lessons.

Thank you again for all your help and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Clifton
Lead inspector

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