

St Giles Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	104226
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	377040
Inspection dates	5–6 July 2012
Lead inspector	Derek Aitken

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Welsby
Headteacher	Mark Dakin
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 November 2008
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Derek Aitken Additional Inspector

Nina Bee Additional Inspector

John Taylor Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 19 lessons taught by 13 teachers. They scrutinised pupils' written work in English and listened to individual pupils reading. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of pupils, self-evaluation records and assessment information. The inspectors analysed responses to questionnaires from 78 parents and carers, 97 pupils and 23 staff.

Information about the school

St Giles is larger than most primary schools. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Two in five pupils are of minority ethnic heritage, with Indian pupils comprising most of this group. One quarter of pupils speak English as an additional language, but very few pupils are at an early stage of language acquisition. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is below average. The school provides for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage through two part-time Nursery classes and two Reception classes. All other pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.

There have been several changes at all levels of staff, including leadership, in the last 18 months.

The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school has Healthy Schools status, Dyslexia Friendly status and holds the International Schools (Foundation level), Anti-Bullying (Bronze) and Eco-Schools (Silver) awards.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Recent initiatives taken by senior leaders have had considerable impact in some areas of the school's work and have arrested underachievement. The school is not yet good because attainment in Key Stage 1 and the achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and more-able pupils is not high enough. Teaching is not consistently good. The governing body has not yet fully developed its skills to fully inform strategic planning. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Pupils achieve satisfactorily and leave Year 6 with attainment that is broadly average. They make better progress in Key Stage 2 than Key Stage 1, where progress is slowed by some weaknesses in their basic skills, especially in literacy. These are redressed in Key Stage 2, although pupils' progress remains slightly better in mathematics than in English.
- Teaching has several good features but these are more consistently found in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 2. Work is not always fully adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more able, and marking is not sharply linked to pupils' success criteria to accelerate their progress.
- Behaviour and safety are satisfactory. Pupils report that behaviour has improved this year. While most pupils behave well and are keen to learn, there is a small minority of boys whose behaviour is sometimes challenging. Staff manage pupils well and the school's secure safeguarding arrangements ensure pupils' safety. Attendance has improved substantially this year.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leaders manage teaching through performance management satisfactorily. However, the quality of feedback to teachers to improve their performance is not always sufficiently well focused to improve classroom practice.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress, especially in Key Stage 1, by:
 - ensuring that new systems and initiatives, especially those relating to literacy and pupils' reading skills, together with more focused support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, are fully embedded in the school's work by December 2012.

- Improve the achievement of more-able pupils and meet the school's target of 80% good or better teaching by:
 - ensuring that work is consistently adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, especially the more able
 - ensuring senior leaders improve the quality of their support to teachers through assessing the quality of pupils' learning and progress in lessons more rigorously before providing feedback on their observations to staff.

- Improve the effectiveness of guidance pupils receive to help them improve by ensuring marking focuses on whether pupils have achieved their success criteria for the written work they produce.

- Ensure that members of the governing body fully develop their skills to contribute more effectively to the strategic direction of the school and to holding senior leaders firmly to account.

Main report**Achievement of pupils**

Parents and carers believe that pupils make good progress. This is true in Nursery and Reception but the inspection team found that pupils' overall progress in lessons and over time is satisfactory rather than good.

Children's skills on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are well below national expectations. They achieve well over the two years as work is closely matched to their different levels of ability and the curriculum promotes all areas of learning well. Boys' progress has improved this year in literacy and this has contributed to a rise in children's attainment by the end of the Reception year. This is enabling the gaps to be closed significantly by the time they move on to Year 1. In previous years pupils have entered Year 1 with well below levels of skills. Pupils' attainment in Year 2, including in reading, was below average in 2011 and this remains the case this year with pupils working typically two terms behind their peers nationally. Their progress, while satisfactory, is on occasions too slow. For example, more-able pupils in Year 2 struggle to scan and understand key vocabulary and find it difficult to tackle word

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problems in mathematics without adult assistance, which affects their self-confidence and reduces the pace of their learning. A renewed focus on letters and sounds (phonics) programmes and improvements to provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is increasing rates of progress for some targeted, vulnerable pupils. However, it is not yet sufficiently embedded to raise achievement for whole year groups. Lower and middle attaining pupils in Year 2 use appropriate strategies to work out the sounds of 'tricky' words in familiar texts but do not have a broad range of experiences in reading different books.

In Key Stage 2, pupils' progress improves steadily and some achieve well as they become more resilient and develop a greater capacity to think critically, for example through testing out mathematical hypotheses. By Year 6, pupils' attainment, including in reading, is average. Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieve satisfactorily. Girls in Year 6, who form the large majority of the current class, are achieving well. Indian pupils also achieve well at the nationally expected Level 4, but usually a below-average proportion of pupils achieve the higher Level 5 in English. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make satisfactory and, on a few occasions, good progress, for example when they have the opportunity to word-process their ideas.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching over time is satisfactory. Most pupils and their parents and carers believe that teaching is good. Some weaknesses in provision in Key Stage 1 and inconsistencies in practice prevent pupils from reaching their full potential. Nursery and Reception children benefit from consistently good teaching. Occasionally, though, marking is not effective in helping children develop basic sentence construction. Teachers manage younger pupils well and work successfully to enable them to sustain their attention during teacher-led sections of the lessons. These pupils are more actively engaged when they move on quickly to practical tasks, as was shown in a design and technology lesson where pupils collaborated well, sewing shapes to make a puppet.

Reading skills are taught well in Key Stage 2, although opportunities are sometimes missed to probe the understanding of more-able pupils. Older pupils benefit from opportunities to enlarge their understanding of more sophisticated and unusual vocabulary through reading texts loosely based on Greek mythology. Teaching makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, particularly in supporting them in working collaboratively and listening with respect to the contributions of others. Teachers question pupils well and ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to share findings during verbal feedback sessions. This enables them to develop their thinking, reflect on their learning and, where necessary, amend their ideas, for example during problem-solving activities. These opportunities for discussion promote pupils' positive engagement and regular praise motivates them to try to succeed. Teaching assistants support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs satisfactorily, but these pupils make better progress when resources are more stimulating and work is more closely

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related to the lesson topic.

In a few lessons, the pace of learning is too variable. Although success criteria are routinely identified for different groups of pupils, these are not always precisely reflected in planning for pupils' independent tasks, which reduces challenge, especially for more-able pupils. Pupils' work is regularly marked, but marking is not sharply linked to the pupils' individual success criteria, which reduces the effectiveness of the guidance provided.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most pupils enjoy their education and are keen to do well. Some younger pupils are more reticent, lack confidence and require sympathetic encouragement from teachers to respond actively in lessons. As pupils mature, they become more self-reliant and demonstrate a willingness to reflect on their learning and wider experiences and, increasingly, take responsibility for their learning.

Although the proportion of parents and carers who completed a questionnaire was below average most considered behaviour to be good and almost all reported that their children felt safe in school. They said that there are a few bullying incidents, mainly involving name-calling, but these are usually well handled by staff. A large majority of pupils behave sensibly and show care and concern for each other. Pupils of different ethnic heritages mix well with each other at work and play and this is reflected in the very low incidence of racist incidents recorded. Inspectors found behaviour over time to be satisfactory, rather than good. Pupils report that the new behaviour policy has been successful in establishing firmer boundaries for pupils, that most pupils behave well, but not all pupils report minor incidents to staff. Leaders have implemented well-considered initiatives to make lunchtimes safer and more enjoyable experiences for pupils. There remain, however, a small number of pupils who, despite the contribution of external agencies, find it hard to manage their behaviour and who are accountable for the above-average level of exclusions. Most pupils are very aware of different types of bullying and have a clear understanding of strategies for staying safe.

Over time attendance is broadly average. More rigorous systems for monitoring and enforcing regular attendance have sharply reduced the occurrence of persistent absence and have contributed to a very substantial rise in attendance to an above-average level this year.

Leadership and management

The new leadership team has implemented well-considered initiatives to improve provision. Tight monitoring systems have been developed to track pupils' performance and identify underachievement. More challenging targets have been set for staff to raise expectations for pupils' annual rates of progress. Assessments for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are now more secure and provision has been restructured to match their needs more closely. Staff have

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been redeployed thoughtfully to help targeted pupils improve their basic skills. Much has been accomplished in a short time, despite staffing discontinuity. Some major revisions to the curriculum are too recent to have yet had a significant impact on raising the attainment of year groups in Key Stage 1. Consequently, while the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum overall, it is not yet sufficiently refined to promote good achievement and good equal opportunities in learning for all groups of pupils.

School self-evaluation is largely accurate in its diagnosis of strengths and weaknesses and provides an appropriate template for school development. The performance of staff is managed satisfactorily and supported by professional development. Lesson observations, conducted by senior leaders, provide teachers with useful, general feedback but sometimes do not focus closely enough on the quality of pupils' progress to identify sharply defined improvement points. The developing strength of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, combined with the accelerated pace of change and pupils' improved attendance, indicates that the school has the capacity for further improvement. The curriculum fosters pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily. Pupils' cultural awareness has been boosted through some thoughtfully planned work based on the Olympics theme. The governing body has made a useful contribution to leaders' efforts to improve attendance and behaviour but has yet to develop the knowledge and understanding to make a full contribution to strategic development planning. Current requirements for safeguarding are met.

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.



9 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Giles Church of England Primary School, Willenhall WV13 2ER

I would like to thank you for your help when the inspection team visited your school and for sharing your views with us, including through the questionnaires some of you completed. Yours is a satisfactory school with some good features but also some areas to improve.

- Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception.
- You told us that you feel safe and that behaviour is improving. Our findings agreed with your views but, as you said, a small number of pupils sometimes behave less well and 'let the side down'.
- Your attendance has shown a big improvement this year.
- Senior leaders are working hard to improve the school.

You make satisfactory progress in your learning and by the end of Year 6 your levels of attainment are broadly average. You make better progress as you move up the school in Key Stage 2. We have asked the staff to do the following to help you achieve better and to help you become more confident learners in Key Stage 1.

- Build the letters and sounds programme carefully into the school's work to improve your reading skills. Develop further their work to support disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Make all teaching at least good by making sure all lessons are carefully planned, especially to stretch those of you who learn more quickly. Make sure that marking is linked to your success criteria. Leaders to check very closely on your learning and progress during lesson observations before giving advice to staff.
- Make sure governors play a bigger role in directing the school's work.

You can help by keeping up your improved attendance and by always trying hard to take a full part in lessons, even when you feel less sure about your answers.

Yours sincerely

Derek Aitken
Lead inspector

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