

Gilmour (Southbank) Infant School

Southbank Road, Garston, Liverpool, Merseyside, L19 9AR

Inspection dates 11–12 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Outstanding leadership from the headteacher and leaders at all levels has established highly effective systems which have been combined with a very clear direction. This has ensured that high standards have been built upon and the quality of provision has been continuously developed and improved.
- Governors have a thorough knowledge of the school. They challenge school leaders vigorously and leave nothing to chance.
- School leaders and governors are very watchful of teaching in the school. The checks made on the quality of teaching and its impact on achievement, by senior leaders, is very rigorous indeed and has resulted in outstanding practice.
- Parents and staff are overwhelmingly positive in their support for the school's leadership.
- The early years provision gives children an excellent start to their education. Their social development is exceptionally good and they make rapid progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are always very keen to learn. Pupils feel very safe in school because they know that they are cared for extremely well.
- Teaching is outstanding. Pupils' varying abilities are taken into account so that there is plenty of challenge and support for their learning. Lots of interesting activities keep pupils on their toes.
- Standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in reading writing and mathematics, and have been consistently so over the past five years. Pupils also make excellent progress in other subjects, such as French, physical education and, in particular, art.
- A small number of boys in Year 2 are not achieving quite as well in writing as other pupils in the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed a range of lessons. Two observations were undertaken jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, pupils, groups of parents, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Also taken into account were 51 responses from parents via Ofsted’s online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- Inspectors observed the school’s work and examined a range of documentation that included: national assessment data and the school’s own assessments of pupils’ progress; minutes from governing body meetings; local authority reports; the school’s own view of its work; samples of pupils’ work and safeguarding documentation.

Inspection team

Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Pamela Hemphill

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized infant school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- There is full-time provision for children in Reception class. Provision for Nursery children is part-time.
- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils during term time.
- The senior leadership of the school, including the headteacher, has changed since the previous inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Do even more to boost the progress of the small number of boys in Year 2 who are not achieving quite as well in their writing as others in the school by:
 - helping them to express themselves more clearly and to use an even greater range of vocabulary
 - consistently challenging them to the limits of their writing ability.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The collective mindset among school staff and governors is that only the best will do. Pupils' and parents' views are listened to and valued. Combined with the vision and drive injected by the headteacher this creates a thriving school, and a safe environment that all pupils enjoy.
- Outstanding practice and the highest expectations are amply modelled by senior leaders. All aspects of the school, including behaviour and attendance, are closely observed. Their influence on the overall quality of teaching and learning is excellent and their view of the school's effectiveness is entirely accurate.
- The local authority gives only light touch support to the school, as it is understandably confident in leaders' ability to maintain current standards and the quality of what it provides for its pupils.
- Highly effective systems, which are clearly understood, are in place to check the quality of teachers' work and the impact that it has on pupils' learning. Support for staff to improve their professional knowledge and skills is well planned to match their own and the school's needs. As a result teaching is usually outstanding and never less than good.
- Middle leaders, responsible for subjects, have been quick to adapt to the challenges of the new primary curriculum to ensure that it provides equality of opportunity for all pupils. They plan a balanced range of learning that provides exceptionally well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepares pupils very well for their lives in modern Britain. Some exciting new topics have been planned, such as the focus on local history and characters to help pupils make links between the past and present. French is an additional exciting feature of pupils' learning, which they thoroughly enjoy.
- Very effective use of the school's sports funding has brought many improvements to physical educational lessons and the range of activities that pupils can enjoy, and this has a direct impact on their fitness and well-being. Impressively, all Year 2 pupils are also taught to swim.
- The school's use of the pupil premium is very effective. The number of pupils eligible for the funding is very small. The 2013-2014 funding supported disadvantaged pupils who also had special educational needs. The funding was carefully targeted to meet the particular needs of these pupils; consequently, all made excellent progress from their starting points.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all of the government's requirements. Safeguarding is given a very high priority at governors meetings and by school staff.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors check standards and pupils' progress very closely by comparing the school's performance with national data. They maintain a very clear overview of the school's work and contribute exceptionally well to the school's planning for improvement and its subsequent development. Governors carefully review their own effectiveness, for example, by ensuring that the school community is fully represented and that the range of expertise is sufficient enough to provide robust challenge for the school. Governors have full understanding of overall teaching quality and of how the performance of teachers is managed. They are well equipped, through training, to deal with issues surrounding increases in teachers' salaries and the way that these are linked to outcomes for pupils. Financial management, including oversight of the pupil premium and sports funding, is very efficient.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct around the school is delightful. Pupils are cheerful and friendly and always extremely courteous to adults and each other. Their behaviour and table manners in the dining room are excellent.
- In lessons, their attitudes to learning are exemplary. Pupils listen very carefully to their teachers and are always keen to learn new things and do their best and neatest work.
- Pupils contribute exceptionally well to the everyday life and ethos of the school. Always neatly dressed in school uniform, they arrive promptly at the beginning of the day and their attendance is above average. They keep their school tidy and are very mindful of others when playing in the playground.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils have a wealth of opportunities to think about their own and others' values and beliefs. Families of minority ethnic pupils contribute to pupils' cultural awareness by sharing information about their different lifestyles. Pupils thrive on the creative way that learning is presented to them through the curriculum.
- Pupils are always praised by visitors for their behaviour and there are many expressions of praise from

others, following educational visits.

- The school council makes sure that all pupils have a say in school matters, such as what playground equipment to buy and by carrying out surveys to gather whole-school views. A successful project resulted in the setting up of a friendship bench in the playground.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel entirely safe in school. They know that adult help is always there when it is needed and that they are cared for extremely well.
- Parents are full of praise for the school, especially its provision of care, and fully support their children's views. The well-attended breakfast club is much appreciated by parents and pupils, who know that they are safe in that additional care and ready to learn at the beginning of the day.
- Pupils fully understand how bullying can occur and that they must tell if they feel bullied, though they say that there is no bullying in their school. They also know what steps to take in order to stay safe when using the internet. There are many displays around the school to remind pupils about the importance of positive relationships and staying safe.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Pupils' past and current work shows that expectations of what can be achieved are consistently high and that pupils are challenged very well. It illustrates that they have received consistently outstanding teaching over time.
- Pupils' abilities are well known to teachers and teaching assistants. Staff are very sensitive to pupils' personal needs and ensure that all get the kind of help that they need in lessons.
- Adults are first class role models for pupils. They maintain the highest expectations regarding behaviour and manage relationships in the classrooms exceptionally well. Praise is used very effectively and sanctions are rarely needed. Consequently, lessons are always 'busy' as pupils get on and enjoy their work.
- Resources, to help mathematics learning for example, are used imaginatively to capture pupils' interest and get lessons off to a brisk start. Technology is used well by teachers and pupils, for example, the use of hand-held computers is a feature in many lessons.
- Literacy skills are taught successfully across all subjects. The way that early years staff encourage language development in the Nursery and Reception classes means that pupils speak confidently in Year 2. Pupils have many opportunities to write imaginatively, and the language they need to write well. The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) throughout the school is outstanding.
- There is a quick pace to learning in mathematics lessons, especially in the Year 2 number skills sessions. Pupils learn to calculate accurately, using what they already know to help them solve problems. For all pupils there is a very good variety of work on shape, measure and practical problem solving linked to learning in other subjects.
- High-quality learning leads to excellent achievement in many subject areas. Impressive art work, particularly illustrating pupils' use of colour is very visible, as is their learning about different artists. Outstanding learning and progress was also seen during the inspection in history, French and physical education.
- Assessment of pupils' progress in lessons is highly effective. All adults play a part in questioning pupils, encouraging them to think about their work and correcting and mistakes.

The achievement of pupils is outstanding

- Children get off to an excellent start and make rapid progress in the early years from overall typical starting points.
- The excellent rate of progress, leading to outstanding achievement, continues into Key Stage 1.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the expected standard in the national screening check for phonics equalled the national average in 2014. This was a vast improvement on the previous year, and was a direct result of the school realising that it could do better and changing the way that phonics is taught. This example of highly effective leadership and management means Year 1 pupils, currently, are well on track to improve even further on the 2014 results.
- Pupils achieve exceptionally well in reading. Year 2 pupils already read confidently and use their knowledge of phonics very effectively to work out unfamiliar words. They understand what they read, and can explain some hidden meanings in their stories. They know how to use dictionaries and describe the

differences between fiction and non-fiction books. All read at home regularly and enjoy talking about their favourite bedtime stories.

- Attainment in writing and mathematics is consistently significantly above the national average. Unvalidated results for 2014 show that, despite the excellent overall performance, boys did not do quite as well as girls in the school in developing their writing. This is because they do not always have such an extensive vocabulary as other pupils and sometimes find it more difficult to express their thoughts clearly in writing. Leaders recognise this and from early years onwards planning is beginning to reflect this area for improvement.
- The most-able pupils are well challenged in lessons and additional booster sessions, in phonics for example, have a strong impact on the standards they reach in reading and writing. Significantly higher than national proportions reach Level 3 in those subjects, as well as in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make exceptional progress. The school invests a great deal in terms of focused learning time, resources and highly skilled teaching support in order to help these pupils achieve their best. Group sessions are sharply focused on ensuring that pupils make outstanding progress. Expectations are very high and pupils are able to check their own and others' work for accuracy during the sessions.
- Currently, a tiny proportion of Year 2 pupils are deemed to be disadvantaged. In 2014, however, a larger number of disadvantaged pupils in Year 2 were also receiving support for their special educational needs. Although unvalidated national data indicates a little difference in their attainment from others in the school and nationally, they made excellent progress from their individual starting points to reach broadly the standards expected for their age at the end of Year 2.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- The school's early assessments show that most children start in the Nursery with skills that are generally typical for their age. They are extremely well provided for in both Nursery and Reception classes and make rapid gains in all the areas of their learning. By the end of the Reception Year the proportion of children who reach a good level of development is well above the national figure, with some exceeding expected levels. They are very well prepared for their move into Year 1.
- Outstanding leadership and management of the early years are at the heart of its success. The leader shares her practical skills and expert knowledge extremely well with early years staff and other staff in the school. Expectations are clear and management systems to back them up are well established and understood so there is consistency in how staff manage and assess children's learning and promote excellent behaviour and safety. Parents are very much involved in the process and are valuable partners in helping children gain their knowledge and skills.
- Teaching and learning throughout the early years is outstanding. Children show a real eagerness to learn, whether with an adult or in one of the many exciting activities that they choose for themselves. Adult-led activities are always highly focused on what children need to learn, and the way that adults talk to children continuously to challenge and develop language and communication skills is exceptional.
- Planning for learning always takes account of the children's own interests and props to encourage imaginative role play are simple but plentiful.
- Excellent use is made of the outdoor area where children explore their environment energetically and have ownership of what they do. A very resourceful group, for example, became 'fire fighters' and used the props they had very imaginatively to act out their adventure. Language development and social skills flourished during the activity.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	104544
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	448260

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	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Athans
Headteacher	Jayne Hathaway
Date of previous school inspection	24 May 2010
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