



Gilmour (Southbank) Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104544
Local Authority Liverpool
Inspection number 286974
Inspection dates 17–18 January 2007
Reporting inspector Clare Henderson

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Southbank Road
School category	Community		Garston, Liverpool
Age range of pupils	3–7		Merseyside L19 9AR
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 4276306
Number on roll (school)	224	Fax number	0151 4949106
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	
		Headteacher	Mrs E Wylie
Date of previous school inspection	19 June 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This school is average in size and serves a socially mixed area. The proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals and of those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are below average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The school has gained the Dyslexia Friendly Schools Quality Mark, the Liverpool Healthy School Award and Investors in People.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Gilmour Infants is an outstanding school. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher staff work together tremendously well in meeting the school's aim of providing the best possible education for all pupils. This outstanding teamwork results in excellent achievement in the academic and personal development of pupils.

Pupils say how much they enjoy school and feel safe because 'Everyone is kind and people always listen to what we say.' They play an important part in shaping the life of the school because they have so many opportunities to share their views and make a difference. Parents give overwhelming support, saying, 'The school puts as much effort and energy into the arts and sports studies as the academic to create a balanced and progressive place for children to learn.' Pupils are very aware of the merits of exercise and healthy eating. Their excellent social and literacy and numeracy skills provide a secure basis for the next stages of their lives.

The outstanding curriculum is enhanced through the exemplary 'extended schools' arrangements which provide clubs and activities for the pupils, adults and members of the local community to participate in. This provision is seen as a flagship within the local authority and is also recognised nationally.

Parents praise the outstanding level of care and support their children receive, saying, 'This is a wonderful school which pays close attention to our children's individual needs.' This starts when children join the school, where outstanding teaching within the Foundation Stage enables them to talk about their ideas and use them freely in play and in their work. This excellent quality of teaching continues in all classes and through the daily 'Playing to learn' lessons where pupils' knowledge and skills are enhanced through play-based activities.

Most children start Nursery with skills which are average for their age. Most exceed the goals expected in all areas of learning by the time they leave the Foundation Stage. In Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to do very well. They understand what they must do to improve because they are set clear and challenging targets, which they work hard to achieve. Outstanding teaching enables them to reach standards that are consistently above average by the end of Year 2 although fewer boys than girls reach higher standards in writing. Arrangements to identify the pupils in need of extra support are very good and close attention is given to ensure that they get the extra help they need, so they too make very good progress.

Very effective systems of self-evaluation ensure that the school knows which areas need to be improved, although the school's evaluation of itself is rather modest. Its capacity to improve is excellent. Since the previous inspection, the school has successfully tackled the one issue that was identified, and has raised achievement and improved the pupils' education to the highest level. Governance is first rate and contributes significantly to overall improvement. The school provides outstanding value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise the standards in writing attained by the more able boys to a similar level to that of the girls.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

When children start in the Foundation Stage, most have skills which are typical of three-year-olds. As a result of the outstanding teaching and support they receive for their individual learning, they make very good progress, particularly in their social skills. Many achieve beyond the goals expected of children of this age. They continue to make excellent progress in Years 1 and 2. Standards have been consistently above average every year since the last inspection. However, fewer boys than girls reached the higher levels of attainment in writing in 2006. The school has recently begun to address this by providing writing resources which will interest and stimulate the boys and encourage them to achieve the higher levels in writing. In recognition of the work done within the school to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities the school has gained the Dyslexia Friendly Schools Quality Mark.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. These aspects are greatly enhanced through 'Mind Friendly Learning', 'Playing to learn' and 'Wake up and shake up' initiatives which successfully impact upon their well-being, physical development and enjoyment of school. Their very positive attitudes and excellent behaviour are strong factors in their outstanding achievement. Attendance is good and pupils report that they feel safe and know who to turn to if they have a problem. Members of the school council are proud of the work they do in improving the school and make a positive contribution to the school community. For example, their good efforts have resulted in improvements to the playground facilities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

In all classes, including the Foundation Stage, teachers and support staff meet the learning needs of pupils in a most creative and inspirational way. As a result pupils make very good progress in their learning. Pupils and staff work collaboratively, sharing their expertise and challenging each other in a background of mutual trust and respect. A strength of teaching is that pupils know clearly, from the start of the lesson, what it is they are to learn. This enables them to achieve high standards in their work.

Teaching assistants and other support staff work effectively to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported very well in lessons and in small groups so that they too make very good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is enriched exceptionally well by a good range of activities both inside and outside the classroom. The Foundation Stage curriculum makes excellent use of the outdoor environment. In this lively imaginative setting, children learn to play and share together well. This enhances their personal development very well. Achievement in mathematics, English and information and communication technology is strengthened by their regular use in other subjects. The extensive range of sporting and creative activities promotes pupils' all-round development and enjoyment of school. The many opportunities they have, for example to learn French and to work alongside musicians, experts in mosaics and artists to develop their creative skills, prepare them very well for their next stage of learning. These experiences are often reflected in project work on specific themes which develop pupils' independent learning skills well. The very good links with the local community and schools make a significant contribution to pupils' excellent achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school's commitment to caring for, guiding and supporting all pupils shines through in its work. Pupils feel safe and are confident that there will be someone to whom they can talk if they need to. The very good programme for promoting pupils' personal, social and health development ensures that they know how to stay safe and healthy. This work has been commended and as a result the school has gained the Liverpool Healthy School award. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, including arrangements for child protection and health and safety, are in place. The school works extremely well with parents and rightly enjoys their confidence. Tracking of pupils' progress is excellent. The school assesses how well pupils are doing and uses this information to set challenging targets for the next steps in their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The dynamic leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher are pivotal in the success of the school. This collegial approach, which is shared by all staff, successfully places the needs of each pupil at the heart of the day-to-day life of the school. The school's Investors in People status reflects this. As a result, equality of opportunity for each pupil is outstanding. Subject leaders are fully involved in accurately evaluating performance and devising ways forward. They are firmly on course to develop opportunities to raise standards even higher by working together as a highly successful and committed team. A recent example is the extension of the curriculum into the

outdoor environment, which has greatly enriched provision for all pupils. The school has provided a wide range of partner schools with excellent ideas on which to build their own success. Governance of the school is excellent. Governors are strong supporters of the school but have no qualms about questioning procedures or initiatives.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We really enjoyed our visit to your school very much. It was wonderful to see what a happy time you have there.

You really enjoy your school because there are so many exciting things to do and learn.

Your teachers and teaching assistants are very good at teaching you and they know exactly what each of you needs to learn. This helps you to learn lots of things. They are also very good at checking how well you are learning. Your mums, dads and carers think that your school is an excellent place to be and we agree with them.

You get lots of exercise in your morning 'wake up and shake up' and taking part in the sporting clubs you attend helps you to be healthy. You are very good at sharing and taking turns and you behave very well. We enjoyed listening to the lively and tuneful way you sang the 'wiggly, waggly worm'. We know from your happy faces that you love to sing.

We hope that you carry on enjoying your school and doing such very good work. We have asked your teachers to help the boys to do even better in their writing. We hope that you will continue to work hard in school and help the teachers so that Gilmour Infants becomes an even better school.