



Gayton Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 105034
Local Authority Wirral
Inspection number 287100
Inspection date 29 November 2006
Reporting inspector Lesley Traves

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Gayton Road
School category	Community		Heswall, Wirral
Age range of pupils	4-11		Merseyside CH60 8PZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0151 3423772
Number on roll (school)	260	Fax number	0151 3428124
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Hywel Jones
		Headteacher	Mr M Whitehill
Date of previous school inspection	27 February 2001		

Age group 4-11	Inspection date 29 November 2006	Inspection number 287100
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Gayton Primary is an average sized school situated in a socially advantaged area of the Wirral. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a few children coming from other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is much lower than in most schools. Similarly, there is only a small number with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational need. This is a popular school and at Key Stage 2, classes are large. There are more boys than girls, which creates an imbalance in some year groups. A new headteacher took up post in April 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school, which provides good value for money. This is exactly as the school sees itself. The personal development of the pupils is outstanding; they flourish in the happy and secure 'family' environment that the school creates. They develop as well-rounded, thoughtful individuals, in response to the good quality care and support they receive and fulfil the school's high expectations of them in this area exceptionally well. A key strength is the way in which they show care and concern for others, for example, through acting as 'buddies' to younger children and through their overwhelming response to charity appeals. Parents are strongly supportive of the work of the school and feel that it provides very well for their children. Pupils really enjoy school life and this is demonstrated by their eagerness in getting down to work in lessons and the energy they put into their tasks, especially when they involve a challenging problem to solve. They thoroughly enjoy the wide range of activities provided which enrich their learning particularly well. Their enthusiasm for the many clubs, visits and visitors is boundless. The school makes exceptionally good use of its partnerships with other organisations in extending the curriculum in this way. Pupils learn the benefits of living a healthy lifestyle through work undertaken on 'healthy eating' and through the growing number of sporting activities on offer to them. Pupils' behaviour and manners are exemplary, because they know what is expected of them. They also know that they are valued and this, in turn, ensures they value others. The nature of the school is reflected very well in the words of one parent, who states that, 'The school is warm and friendly at all times and the children are made to feel valued; there is a real sense of team spirit.' This is a view shared by others.

Pupils achieve well in response to good teaching. They get off to a strong start in the Foundation Stage and continue to build well on this through Key Stages 1 and 2. Consequently, by the end of Year 6, standards are high in English, mathematics and science. However, throughout the school, standards are not as high in writing as they are in reading or mathematics. In the 2006 national tests for 11-year-olds, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 was significantly lower in writing than in reading or mathematics. This situation was quickly investigated and the school has recently put a range of strategies in place to ensure that all pupils build more rapidly on their skills. These strategies have not yet had time to impact on standards and achievement. Teachers plan thoroughly, ensuring that all ability levels are well catered for. They have high expectations of pupils' work rate and behaviour. Teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and challenging, through practical activities and problem-solving. Pupils enjoy these lessons best of all and learn well as a result. The provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with particular gifts or talents is good. Teaching assistants are skilfully deployed and give high quality support to maximise learning throughout the school.

The school is well led and managed. It has sustained its strengths since the last inspection and has improved important areas, such as the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1. The recently appointed headteacher has been particularly well supported by the senior management team and governors since taking up his post. The transition

has been seamless and stability maintained because there is high quality teamwork and strong commitment at all levels within the school. The headteacher has set a clear direction and has accelerated improvements in key areas, such as developing resources for information and communication technology (ICT). Parents and pupils are pleased that he is seeking their opinions about the school and the plans for improvements. Leadership and management evaluate the work of the school rigorously and accurately and, as a result, know its strengths and areas for development extremely well. The leadership team, governors and staff are driving forward with commitment, energy and skill; they have high aspirations for the school and demonstrate the ability to achieve these. Consequently, there is excellent capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and raise standards in writing throughout the school and in particular, for the more able pupils at the end of Key Stage 2.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and reach high standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. On entry to the Foundation Stage, most pupils have skills above those expected for their age, although the full range of ability is represented. Language development is not quite as strong as other areas. Pupils get off to a good start and build on this rapidly through Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, almost half the class has achieved the higher Level 3 in the national reading and mathematics tests. Writing is a relatively weaker area, although standards here are still well above average. Good progress continues through Key Stage 2, and by the time they leave in Year 6, over half of the pupils usually reach the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics and almost three quarters in science. This positive picture has been sustained since the last inspection. However, achievement in writing is not as good as in other subjects. The school has carried out a thorough analysis of writing and has pinpointed issues to be addressed. Measures have been put into place this term to bring about improvement. Pupils' work indicates that they also achieve high standards in other subjects, such as history. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who find some aspects of learning more challenging make good progress, because they are well supported.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils report that they really enjoy coming to school because 'lessons are fun' and they 'have lots of friends to play with'. They have excellent attitudes to learning, demonstrated through their eagerness to get down to work in lessons and their response to challenges. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. This is strongly reflected in the levels of respect and care they show for others and in the pride they take in their work. Pupils take their responsibilities as 'buddies' to the younger children very seriously indeed. Behaviour both in lessons and

around the school is exemplary. Pupils say that they know they are valued and trusted. They are particularly pleased that they can play a part in developing the school through their work on the school council.

Pupils are able to make healthy food choices. They also know how to keep themselves safe, for example, when travelling to and from school. Their very well developed literacy and numeracy skills, coupled with good attendance and the ability to get on well with others ensure they are very effectively prepared for future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good with some outstanding features and is the basis of pupils' good achievement. During the inspection, some outstanding teaching was also seen, which had extra sparkle and challenged pupils to the limit. The good quality teaching is characterised by thorough planning which provides effectively for different ability groups, high expectations from staff of pupils' work rate and behaviour, and good use of assessment in lessons to promote future learning. The pupils learn best when tasks are practical and involve problem solving; the majority of tasks set engage and challenge pupils well. Particularly good use is made, in some classes, of the newly installed interactive whiteboards to engage pupils and catch their interest. Pupils state that, 'Teachers have a good sense of humour and help you improve your work.' High quality, sensitive support from teaching assistants enables those with learning difficulties to make good progress. Teaching assistants also make a strong contribution to learning in the large classes at Key Stage 2.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils well. It ensures good provision for literacy and numeracy, enabling pupils to make good progress. Activities planned often link subjects together in stimulating and enjoyable ways, for example, through using art, design, music and dance to support work in geography. This helps pupils make connections in their learning. A rich and varied programme of visits and visitors extends learning very effectively, through first hand experiences that fire pupils' imaginations. There are outstanding enrichment opportunities provided through the excellent links with local sports clubs and other schools. These add an exciting dimension to learning. For example, there are three modern foreign languages on offer. Pupils say that they are pleased that the number of out-of-school clubs is growing because they enjoy them so much. Resources for ICT are ageing and limited. Consequently, pupils do not always have as many opportunities as they could to use ICT independently to support their work. The school makes very effective use of its partnerships with other local schools to compensate for this. Funding is currently being used to fully upgrade the computer suite, install whiteboards and provide more computers in classrooms.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and support provided for pupils is good. Staff know the pupils very well and have their welfare firmly at heart. The very positive relationships that exist between staff and pupils have a strong impact on both personal development and learning. Pupils report that they feel safe and know that there is always someone to listen to them if they have a problem. They are happy and settled in the secure environment the school creates for them. Arrangements for child protection and health and safety are robust. Procedures for checking on pupils' academic progress are rigorous and effective. They enable challenging targets to be set and the right support given. Pupils are very clear about what they need to do to improve because they understand their targets and are closely involved in assessing their own progress towards them. Marking is used particularly well as part of this process. The school has identified the need to improve assessment arrangements for writing to ensure pupils make faster progress throughout the school. Procedures are being tightened, but it is too soon to see the impact of this work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The recently appointed headteacher has set a very clear direction for the work of the school. He has been particularly well supported by senior managers and governors, so that in a short time he has gained the respect and confidence of staff, parents and pupils. The skilled and dedicated staff work together very effectively as a team and are embracing new challenges with commitment and enthusiasm. Together, the leadership team, governors and staff have identified the most appropriate priorities for development. A high quality improvement plan and ongoing evaluation underpins all aspects of the school's work and is enabling leaders to measure the success of their actions. Subject coordinators take an active role, for example, in checking on pupils' work and teachers' planning, and can demonstrate clearly the improvements they have brought about. The school has identified the need for their role to be extended to include monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom. Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They make particularly good use of their wide ranging expertise to support the school's work. They are closely involved in planning future developments and act effectively as 'critical friends'. They have identified the need for greater involvement in checking on the work of the school at first hand as the next stage in their development.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
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?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

As you know, I recently visited your school to find out how well your teachers are helping you to learn and enjoy school. Thank you for being so polite and helpful to me. I enjoyed talking to you and taking part in the 'Shoe Box' assembly. I was amazed at how hard you had worked with your mums and dads to put these together and I am sure that they will make some children very happy at Christmas.

I was really pleased to hear that you like your school very much indeed! I am glad you enjoy your lessons and all the other exciting activities available to you, like the Italian lessons and the science club. I agree with you that your school is a good school and that the teachers and teaching assistants are good at helping you to learn. I also agree that Mr Whitehill has a good sense of humour! All the staff take care of you all very well and I was pleased to know that you feel safe and always have someone to talk to if you have a problem. Your behaviour is excellent and you should be really proud of yourselves for the way you get on well together and care for each other. You younger children are very lucky to have the 'buddies' from the other classes who work so hard to help you. I have asked your teachers to do one thing to make the school even better - that is to help you to improve your writing so that it is as good as it can possibly be. You can play your part in this by trying your best with your writing at all times.

Thank you very much for helping me. I hope you continue to work hard and enjoy learning at Gayton.

Have a lovely Christmas.