

# Gillingstool Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109126
<b>Local Authority</b>	South Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	288288
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Tom Simpson

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	161
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Hazel Edwards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Clive Riches
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 June 2002
<b>School address</b>	Gillingstool Thornbury South Gloucestershire BS35 2EG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01454 866527
<b>Fax number</b>	01454 866528

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average sized school serving a socially diverse community. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is below that normally found. Nearly all the pupils are from a White British background and none is at an early stage of learning English. The number of pupils who enter and leave the school other than at the normal time is above average. The school has part-time nursery provision. A new headteacher was appointed in 2004 and a new deputy headteacher in 2005.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a very popular school which is currently providing a satisfactory education. It has a number of strengths and is improving under the proactive leadership of the relatively new headteacher and senior management team. It has successfully addressed most of the weaknesses found in the last inspection. For example, standards in writing are now better. However, standards in science are not now as strong as was previously reported. Several strategies for improving the school's performance and enriching the curriculum, such as establishing more effective assessment procedures and introducing French, have been implemented. This, together with the enthusiasm and commitment of staff at all levels, means that the school has a sound capacity to improve further in the future.

One of the main strengths of the school is the successful way in which the large number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported and helped to reach their potential. Another is the good personal care that is provided for the pupils. Pupils are well known to staff as individuals and are successfully helped to raise their self-esteem. This impacts well on their personal development which is good. Nearly all parents express confidence in the way the school provides for their children. One parent summed up their positive views: 'We chose to send our children to this school because here every child really does matter'. Another commented: 'I think the school is doing a fantastic job of providing an environment for all children to enjoy and in which they can learn to the level of their ability'. The school provides a good and enriched curriculum which is effectively supporting pupils' personal development and the enjoyment they have in their work.

Provision for the children in the Nursery and Reception class is good, which means that they get off to a good start. The headteacher and other senior staff are successfully involved in assessing the school's strengths and weaknesses and promoting positive changes. Recent changes to the management structure are relevant to the school's needs, but have not had time yet to fully impact on standards. Overall leadership and management are, therefore, currently satisfactory.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. By the time they leave the school, some pupils reach standards which are below national averages. However, their achievement is at least satisfactory against their starting points and is good in the case of writing. Nevertheless, some potentially more able pupils are not achieving as well as they might because they are not always provided with enough challenge in the work they are being set.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of under performance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

### What the school should do to improve further

- 
- Improve standards in science.
- Raise the level of challenge in tasks provided for potentially more able pupils in the minority of lessons where expectations are not high enough.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. In 2006, Year 2 National Curriculum assessment results were broadly average overall. National test results in Year 6 were below average overall, mainly because of weaknesses in science. However, this still represents satisfactory progress against the pupils' starting points. To some extent test results are adversely affected by the high proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and by the high number of pupils who enter the school other than at the normal time. Both these groups make sound progress but many fail to reach average levels in national tests.

The school is successfully striving to improve standards in a number of ways. For example, writing in Years 1 and 2, which was a weakness at the time of the previous report, is now the strongest of the assessed areas. Pupils continue to make good progress in writing throughout the school.

Children get off to a good start when they enter the school, particularly in developing social and learning skills. By the time they reach Year 1, their overall standards are just slightly below average. As they move through the school, most groups of pupils make at least satisfactory progress. However, some potentially more able pupils are not achieving as well as they might.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils are confident learners who enjoy coming to school. They have positive attitudes towards all activities, learning and playing happily together. They feel free from bullying and say that they feel 'absolutely safe'. Behaviour is particularly good. Through a very effective school council, the pupils share in decision making, for example proposing security fences for the impending new school buildings.

The pupils are thoughtful, caring and value one another. A teacher from the local secondary school described the way Year 6 pupils organised play activities for Year 1 pupils as 'the best example of children supporting one another that I have seen'. Pupils contribute effectively to the local community and enjoy helping those less fortunate than themselves. They are proud of their prize winning allotment through which they are developing a good understanding of healthy living and beginning to appreciate aspects of economic well-being. Pupils gain a range of basic skills which prepares them satisfactorily for the adult world. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. There are particular strengths in moral and social development.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

A strength of the teaching is the positive way that the pupils are managed. This leads to good behaviour and good relationships at all levels. In most lessons, a positive and generally quiet learning environment is created which encourages pupils to be confident in asking questions and enables them to concentrate on their work. Teaching methods are regularly varied and often imaginative, which enhances the pupils' interest in lessons and supports their personal development. Teachers make good use of learning objectives to ensure that the pupils are clear

about what is expected of them and to check how well they have got on. Effective strategies are in place to assess and track pupils' progress in English and mathematics. These are currently being extended to include science and, in most lessons, are helping teachers to match work effectively to the needs of the pupils. In a small number of lessons, however, the pace of learning is too slow and expectations are not high enough. This is particularly the case for more able pupils who do not achieve as well as they might when there is not enough challenge in the tasks provided for them.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

Provision for children in the Nursery and Reception class is good and ensures that the children gain an enthusiasm for learning from the moment they join the school. The curriculum throughout the school is enriched through effective provision for art and music and by linking subjects together in a variety of ways. For example, good use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to support work in other areas. The curriculum has been adapted well to boost skills in pupils' writing. The school is currently working on changes to the science curriculum in order to make it more relevant for the pupils and raise standards in the subject. A good range of out-of-class activities supports learning across the curriculum and enhances pupils' personal development. There are good links with other local providers. These include joint activities with a secondary school specialising in the arts and working with other primary schools on an Indian music project. There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities which means that they regularly make at least satisfactory progress against their individual targets.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Good relationships and mutual respect support good pastoral care and enhance the pupils' personal development. Pupils who have started their education elsewhere are carefully and sensitively assimilated into the life of the school by both teachers and support staff. A parent of one of these children commented: 'The school is warm and friendly. My child loves it.' Links with outside agencies are good, especially in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. The school has good regard for pupils' well-being and all requirements in relation to health and safety, child protection and safe staff recruitment are fully in place. It has developed a range of strategies to support pupils' academic development and their progress. For example, pupils are set individual targets in English and mathematics and this strategy is currently being extended to science in order to raise standards in this subject. However, there is still some inconsistency in the use of marking to guide pupils as to where they should go next in their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher provides good leadership and direction and has a strong vision for improving the school's performance and raising standards further. He has established a very positive working atmosphere in the school. He is well supported by the senior management team whose members have clear individual and corporate roles. Management has recently been restructured to increase the involvement of middle managers and governors in developing the curriculum

and to broaden accountability for the school's work. All staff are proactive in supporting positive change, for example in welcoming the new management structure and in enthusiastically implementing the introduction of French in Years 3 to 6. However, the role of some of the curriculum team members is still underdeveloped, which means that they do not have enough impact on the development of their subjects.

Careful monitoring of teaching and analysis of data by senior staff successfully inform satisfactory school self-evaluation. For example, the school has identified weaknesses in science and put in place strategies, such as effective support groups in Year 6, to improve provision for the subject. It is too soon, however, for the action taken to have had an impact on the standards being reached by the pupils. The governing body is supportive and satisfies its statutory responsibilities. Some individual governors, including the chair, are involved well in the work of the school. Despite recent initiatives, however, the governing body's role in monitoring aspects of the school's provision is still underdeveloped.

The school graded its overall effectiveness as good because of the pupils' good personal development and the good quality of aspects of the provision. The inspection team judges it to be satisfactory because pupils' achievement is currently satisfactory overall.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

3 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gillingstool Primary School, Thornbury, BS35 2EG

Thank you for making us so welcome at your school. We enjoyed meeting you and hearing about your work. You told us how much you like your school. We enjoyed our visit and now want to share with you what we thought about your school. We found that you are provided with a sound education.

Here are some of the things that we found to be particularly good:

- You are well behaved and your personal development is good; for example, you enjoy your lessons and are good at helping people who are less fortunate than yourselves.
- You are well cared for, supported and guided by the adults at the school.
- You have a good curriculum provided for you and a good range of out-of-lesson activities.
- The headteacher and staff are working hard to make the school even better.

This is what we have suggested to help the school to improve:

- Make sure that you all achieve as well as you can in science.
- Make sure that those of you who are quick to learn always have to think hard about the tasks you are given.

Thank you again for your help.

With best wishes

Tom Simpson Lead inspector