



# Germander Park School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 110375  
**Local Authority** Milton Keynes  
**Inspection number** 288650  
**Inspection date** 21 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Olson Davis

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Infant	<b>School address</b>	1 Germander Place
<b>School category</b>	Community		Conniburrow
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4-7		Milton Keynes MK14 7DU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01908 674620
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	100	<b>Fax number</b>	01908 777018
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs C Howard
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs F Howitt
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 December 2002		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school is smaller than average and serves a generally disadvantaged area. Three out of ten pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is much higher than average. Almost half of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, the largest being Black African and Polish. Approximately, three out of ten pupils speak a first language other than English. More pupils have learning difficulties and disabilities than usual. The number of pupils who leave or join the school other than at the usual admission time is above average. The new headteacher took up her post in September 2005 when the school changed from a first school to an infant school.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Germander Park provides a satisfactory standard of education and is an improving school. The school has been through a period of turbulence, especially in staffing, which has impeded its improvement and has had a detrimental impact on pupils' progress. The relatively new headteacher has been successful in providing clear direction for the school. She has quickly established a common purpose among the new staff, firmly fixed on raising standards and pupils' achievement. There is a good ethos with a strong sense of community. The school works closely with outside agencies, including the local authority, who have provided valuable support and guidance. These links have helped to improve standards, teaching and aspects of leadership and management. School self evaluation is satisfactory. Although the school has overestimated its performance in some areas, school leaders identify areas of weakness and take effective action to bring about improvement, for example in attendance which is now satisfactory. The school has a good capacity to improve because of its recent record of improvement.

Children are given a satisfactory start to their education in the Foundation Stage. From low starting points children make satisfactory progress but standards remain below average by the time they enter Year 1. Progress in Years 1 and 2 is also satisfactory now as a result of better teaching. This represents a significant improvement this year. The results of the 2006 national assessments were exceptionally low. Most pupils, and particularly the more able, did not achieve as well as they should. The school has made considerable progress since then to raise pupils' achievement. However, more able pupils do not do well enough, particularly in writing.

Pupils' better progress is apparent because the quality of teaching and learning has improved and is now satisfactory overall. Teachers make sound use of assessment to provide work at the right level for most pupils. However, there is a lack of sharpness in target setting and evaluating the progress of groups of pupils. This results in insufficient attention being given to accelerating the progress of some pupils, particularly the more able.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They respect the cultural differences of others and are already showing a good understanding of diversity in society. Most enjoy coming to school in response to the caring attitudes shown by adults. Most pupils behave reasonably well, although some feel that unkind behaviour by some pupils is not dealt with effectively. The curriculum is improving and now offers better opportunities for learners, although it is not yet providing sufficient challenge for all. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the clubs and other activities in school, such as chess, French and the breakfast club. These add to pupils' satisfactory personal development and to their enjoyment of school.

The school's register of adults working with children does not meet the recommended guidelines.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching challenges more able pupils to achieve as well as they can, particularly in writing.
- Make better use of target setting and assessment to accelerate the progress of all groups of pupils.
- Ensure that a central list of adults working with children is compiled according to government guidelines.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

The achievement of pupils currently in the school is satisfactory. Children enter the Reception class with levels of skills that are lower than generally expected. Recent improvements in the curriculum and teaching in the Foundation Stage mean that children make sound progress. However, a significant proportion does not achieve the goals expected of them when they enter Year 1, particularly in their mathematical and language development. In 2006 standards at the end of Year 2 were exceptionally low. No pupils attained the highest level in reading, writing or mathematics. Writing was the area of greatest weakness. There was a legacy of underachievement brought about by previous weaknesses in teaching. Pupils are now making better progress and the school's data indicate that standards will be higher next year, although they will remain below average. Improvements in the teaching have led to improved achievement. However, more able pupils could do better, particularly in writing. There is no significant difference in the achievement of pupils of different ethnic background although pupils from White British background do better than minority ethnic pupils. Girls generally do better than boys but this reflects their respective starting points. Pupils with learning difficulties make similar progress to their classmates because of the additional support they receive.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory overall, with some important strengths and a few areas which still need attention. Boys and girls of all ages are able to speak confidently about their school and they all say they enjoy it. They are acquiring a sound understanding of the importance of staying safe and adopting a healthy approach to life, saying that they benefit from the opportunities provided for physical exercise. They are developing responsible attitudes to community life and are starting to understand their own role in making things better. One of their most inspiring feelings is that they want to 'be kind' to each other. Pupils' attitudes in lessons are positive and the effects of teachers' consistent application of the school's strategies for managing behaviour are evident.

On the other hand, pupils know that some aspects of life at school are not as good as they should be. The pupils on the school council are aware of what it might achieve,

but they feel it has not yet had time to make an impact. One said, 'It hasn't really got going yet'. Behaviour is only satisfactory because the behaviour of a few pupils can sometimes interfere with their own learning and the learning of others. Pupils know what to do if any bullying occurs and they are pleased that the school has sanctions to deal with it, but they feel that these have not yet been sufficiently effective. They can see that there has been improvement. One said, 'More pupils are good now and the bad ones are copying them'.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

None of the class teachers currently working in the school have been in post for longer than six months. The quality of teaching, including that in the Foundation Stage, is satisfactory overall and is starting to make a real difference to achievement, which is much better than it used to be. Strengths in the teaching include good behaviour management and the development of positive relationships with pupils. Teachers plan their lessons using a common format and this means that pupils know what to expect. Pupils respond satisfactorily to the school's high expectations by working reasonably hard and most are now making satisfactory progress in their lessons. Teachers mark pupils' work consistently and give them helpful advice on how to improve. In some lessons assessment is not used effectively to plan the next steps in learning. As a result, more able pupils find the work lacks challenge. Whilst pupils enjoy the lessons and are usually aware of their purpose only a few of them can state clearly what their targets are. As a result they are not always clear what they need to do to move to the next level in their learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Developing the curriculum was an immediate priority for the new headteacher, as it had been under-resourced in the past. There are now systems for planning the programmes of learning, which are used consistently throughout the school, and which ensure that pupils can build on the knowledge, skills and understanding they already possess. Under the supervision of the headteacher, staff regularly review the extent to which their pupils have fulfilled their expectations. Teachers are aware that the outcomes of their lessons are measured not only in terms of test results, but also in terms of pupils' personal development. Resources have been improved and the walls of the school provide a colourful and stimulating learning environment. Pupils benefit from a range of out of school provision. Pupils are acquiring the sound basic skills and social skills that will help them prepare for the next stage of their education. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. However, there is not enough provision for integrated indoor and outdoor learning across all areas of learning. As with other aspects of the school's provision, many of the recent improvements are still

at an early stage of development. They have not yet impacted fully on pupils' personal development and achievement, particularly of more able pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. Adults share a high level of concern for pupils' well-being, as a result pupils feel safe. Systems for ensuring their health and safety are in place, as are the required procedures for child protection. Whilst arrangements to check adults working with children are in place the school's system for recording these checks does not fully meet the recommended guidelines. Induction procedures for pupils entering the school outside of usual times are helping them to settle in smoothly. Close links with the nursery also help pupils to settle in quickly. Pupils and their families are well supported by the breakfast club which provides a nutritious start to the school day. The school makes satisfactory provision for the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and enables support assistants to spend time planning alongside the teachers. Support for pupils with English as an additional language is not so well developed and this slows their progress. Guidance and support for learning are inconsistent between teachers as assessment information is not being used well enough.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher and governors are sufficiently focused on raising standards. Weaknesses in attainment, particularly in writing, are being tackled but more needs to be done. The 'Raising Attainment Plan' developed with the local authority pinpoints accurately how to bring about necessary improvements. The school improvement plan is less precise and does not effectively link planned actions with measurable outcomes for pupils. The views of pupils and their parents are sought and used when appropriate to inform future planning.

Teaching is monitored satisfactorily and has led to improvements, particularly for the teachers in their first year. This is already having a positive impact on achievement. The school is becoming more proficient in collecting assessment information to track the progress of individual pupils. This information is not used well enough to monitor the progress of different groups to identify when some pupils are not achieving as well as they should.

Governors are supportive and place strong emphasis on developing the community aspects of the school's work. They provide increasing challenge to the school to improve its provision for pupils but do not hold the school to account enough for the progress made by some groups of pupils.

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## 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	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
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>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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>	3
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<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.

## 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?	No
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 enjoyed our visit to your school and would like to thank you for making us so welcome. We enjoyed talking with you. You told us that you like coming to school, and that it has improved recently. We think that your school is giving you a satisfactory education.

You are learning more in lessons and standards have improved since last year. Your work in reading and mathematics has improved but some of you could do harder work in writing. The staff take care of you and make sure you are safe. You behave well and get on well with each other. You know a lot about people from around the world and it was good to see that you show care for others.

You can help your teachers to make the school do even better. We have asked the headteacher and teachers to improve three important things:

- make sure that everyone is given hard enough work, especially in helping you to improve your writing
- make better use of what the teachers know about you and your work so that they can guide you and help you to learn more quickly
- make sure that the school has a list which shows all those working with you have got the right qualifications and have been properly checked.

We hope that you will help your teachers as they try to make the school better for you.

Yours sincerely

Olson Davis

Lead inspector