

St Giles Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104226
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	308547
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Michelle Parker HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	321
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	46
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	49
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Craig Fullard
Headteacher	Robert Travis
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Walsall Street Willenhall WV13 2ER
Telephone number	01902 368308
Fax number	01902 368308

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2008
Inspection number	308547

© Crown copyright 2008

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 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Giles is a large school that serves a diverse and ethnically mixed population in the heart of the urban 'Black Country'. Around 20% of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above the national average. Approximately 27% of the pupils speak English as additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly below the national average. When pupils begin school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), standards are below those expected nationally for children of this age.

The school has attained Healthy School status, the DCSF PE Sport Mark and the FA Charter standard, as well as achieving Eco School status. The school is currently in the process of applying for Dyslexia Friendly School status.

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 aspires to be outstanding. The school succeeds in its aim of ensuring that all pupils reach their full potential. Pupils say the school is a 'friendly place' and are rightly proud of their school and their achievements. All pupils make good progress so that at the end of Key Stage 2, standards are broadly average. The key reasons for the school's successes are the very good leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, together with the hard work of the dedicated staff team. The school has a very good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. These usefully inform the development plan, and financial management and performance management systems. This focusing of resources, combined with a good and developing curriculum and good teaching, has enabled the school to improve year on year.

Lessons are well planned and provide pupils with a wide range of activities which promote good learning. Pupils enjoy these activities, but do not have enough opportunities to review their work or to develop their critical thinking. Teachers encourage pupils to talk about what they are doing but do not give them sufficient opportunities to work independently. Teachers know their pupils well and behaviour is managed effectively. The school uses a wide variety of strategies to continue to improve behaviour, such as offering additional activities at playtime and the training of lunchtime supervisors. Pupils feel safe and secure. Well taught lessons in personal, social and health education ensure that they have a good awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Pupils confirm that staff deal with very occasional bullying incidents efficiently and that they are resolved quickly. Pupils value 'Golden Time' – a positive reward system for good behaviour – and the merit system that promotes positive attitudes to learning across the school.

The effective care and support of pupils are demonstrated through the school's good induction arrangements. Home visits, made before a child starts in the Nursery, establish effective links with parents that help children to settle easily into school. Good transition arrangements continue so that children moving into Key Stage 1 are confident about the next stage of their education. Parents have many opportunities to be involved in their child's education. For example, they contribute to the 'Golden Book' where children are nominated for rewards for making big improvements in their behaviour or learning. Parents are invited to take part in a wide range of family learning activities with their children. Assessment and tracking of pupils' progress are good and enable staff to make timely interventions to support and improve pupils' understanding and progress.

The school council encourages pupils to take responsibility. It recently raised money to develop the playground buddies scheme. Pupils' business and enterprise skills were applied well to raise money to buy caps for the buddies to wear.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision for the youngest children is good because it is planned, led and managed well. All staff are deployed effectively to support children's learning. Children enter the Nursery with skills and capabilities well below the levels expected for their age, particularly in language, communication, and personal, social and emotional development. The school rightly prioritises

improving pupils' skills in these areas. Thus children make good progress by the end of EYFS. They build effectively on this platform in their future years at the school.

Children enjoy the wide range of stimulating indoor and outdoor activities. Much emphasis is placed on encouraging children to explore and investigate. Supervising adults effectively develop children's language and communication. The school is appropriately planning to increase further access to the outdoor learning environment.

Assessment of children's learning is a strength which informs lesson planning. This ensures that activities address all pupils' learning needs well. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used to great effect as an assessment tool. For example, children in a Reception class record 'super sentences' on MP3 microphones. Children enjoy taking part and are keen to speak, and this helps them give their best performance.

What the school should do to improve further

-
- Provide pupils with more opportunities to work independently, and to critically review their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The school has made consistent progress in raising standards over the last three years. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards overall are average, and in mathematics girls attained better than their counterparts nationally. Weaknesses in boys' writing have been correctly identified and effective interventions are in place. Progress is good throughout the school. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well, as do pupils who speak English as an additional language. This is because the school knows all its pupils very well and ensures that work is carefully matched to pupils' needs. The school's analysis of performance data is thorough and is communicated clearly, so that staff can use it to plan effectively.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. Attendance is in line with schools nationally. Pupils are keen to learn, work well together and show mutual respect. The majority of pupils show good behaviour in and outside the classroom.

The wide variety of external trips, a residential visit and visitors coming into school broaden pupils' cultural awareness. The local church is part of the everyday life of the school and this, coupled with visits to a broad range of places of worship, encourages strong spiritual awareness.

Pupils thrive on the opportunities they have for responsibility, for example through the school council, as classroom buddies and as playground friends. As a result, all pupils care well for each other. Pupils learn about the importance of working and contributing to the community by raising money supporting local and national charities. They know how to stay fit and well through active participation in a range of sports. They have a good understanding of healthy eating. Key skills in literacy and numeracy are satisfactory but in other ways, such as developing teamwork, the school is preparing pupils well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Throughout the school, pupils are keen to succeed and thoroughly enjoy their learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They plan their lessons well to take account of the needs of different groups of pupils. Questions are used well to engage and encourage pupils, but opportunities are sometimes missed to prompt them to show what they have understood through explanations and self-assessment. The other relative weakness is that lessons are sometimes too teacher-led and so pupils are not able to consolidate their independent learning skills. The use of talk partners helps pupils to understand ideas better and is a consistent feature across the school. Both teachers and teaching assistants are deployed highly effectively to support both learning and behaviour. The identification of weaknesses in writing, in particular for boys, has appropriately led developments in drama and ICT. The strategies introduced have successfully increased the motivation of boys. They talk very positively about classroom activities such as 'hot seating'. This has led to improvements in the standards of their writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides opportunities for all learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to make good progress. There is good provision for literacy, numeracy, science and ICT. A wide range of high quality educational visits link well to curricular areas. These bring alive learning for pupils. Examples include a visit to Selly Manor to support a history project on the Tudors and the annual residential visit in Year 5, which successfully fosters pupils' self-confidence and teamwork. Pupils are eager to talk about what they learn and how 'brilliant' the experiences are.

The school has successfully boosted pupils' writing by integrating ICT and drama into literacy sessions. In developing its innovative practice, pupils are gradually being provided with more opportunities to be creative.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The pastoral and personal support given to pupils is strong and contributes well to their good personal development and well-being. Strong relationships between all staff and pupils and the mutual respect they share contribute to the high quality of care in the school. Pupils speak fondly of their teachers and say that they are kind, helpful and fun to be with. Teachers use assessments effectively to give good feedback to pupils about what they have done well, but this is not developed to help pupils work more independently.

The close liaison with a range of service providers ensures good care and support for all pupils, including those most at risk. Arrangements for safeguarding and child protection are firmly in place. Regular risk assessments ensure that pupils are taught in a safe environment. The rigorous systems for monitoring and improving pupils' attendance ensure most pupils attend regularly. A detailed tracking system has been developed and is used successfully by all staff to target underachieving groups.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy headteacher form an impressive team. They are dedicated to doing the best for all pupils and use their detailed knowledge and information of both staff and pupils to provide effective challenge and support. Monitoring at all levels is sharply focused on raising standards. Information is shared well at all levels of the school. Subject leaders manage well. This is because they have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility. Governors are energetic in their support and challenge for the school. They are keen to question and listen to staff. This promotes a culture of celebrating success. Careful matching of resources to needs through effective use of financial software ensures that the school can demonstrate excellent value for money. Thus the school is well positioned to meet the aims in its development plan.

Community cohesion is developing satisfactorily. The school actively seeks ways to support parents, and its open door policy encourages all parents to talk with staff. Members of the wider community are regularly invited into school and deepen pupils' understanding of their locality. The majority of parents are very pleased with their children's education and as a result, this is a popular and oversubscribed school.

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.

Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

20 November 2008

Dear Pupils

St Giles CofE Primary School, Willenhall, WV13 2ER

Thank you very much for the warm, friendly welcome you gave us. The comments you made to us were very helpful in forming a clear picture of your school. We agree with you that you go to a good school, of which you can be justly proud. These are the main things that are going well.

- You are making good progress with your work.
- You are enthusiastic, polite and well behaved, both in class and in the playground.
- You care about others and help each other.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants teach you well and help you to make the most of your time in school.
- The school takes good care of you so that you know how to keep safe and be healthy.
- Your headteacher and senior staff run the school well so that you have a good education.

There are no major weaknesses in your school. However, I have asked your school do the following:

- give you more opportunities to demonstrate what you can do independently
- make sure you can review your work.

I hope you will all continue to work hard and enjoy school.

Yours sincerely

Michelle Parker

Her Majesty's Inspector