

Gilbert Scott Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135151
Local Authority	Croydon
Inspection number	329038
Inspection dates	5–6 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrusell

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	211
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Shaun Whitehead
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Gandolfo
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Farnborough Avenue South Croydon CR2 8HD
Telephone number	020 8657 4722
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized primary school, formed in September 2007 through the amalgamation of the Gilbert Scott Infant and Junior Schools. An attached Children's Centre opened in September 2008, which incorporates the Croydon Opportunity Play Group. A very high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Almost half of the pupils are drawn from minority ethnic groups, particularly from Black or Black British of Caribbean or African backgrounds. About a quarter of pupils have a home language other than English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. This includes an above-average proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need. The main needs represented are autism, speech and language, and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. There are two resource bases, which support pupils with these more complex learning difficulties. The school has the Healthy School Quality Mark and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Gilbert Scott Primary is a satisfactory school. The headteacher, well supported by her deputy and senior leadership team, recognises that work needs to be done to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that achievement and standards are raised. The school is being supported by the Improving Schools Programme (ISP). The programme is now in its second year and has resulted in a gradual rise in the proportion of pupils making good progress throughout the school. Overall, however, pupils make satisfactory progress. The careful tracking of pupils' work shows progress to be inconsistent both within and between year groups. There has been some improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, which overall is satisfactory. Where there have been particular concerns, support has been given and teaching has consequently improved. The school recognises that fuller use needs to be made of assessment information to plan an appropriate level and style of work for all pupils, especially more and less able pupils, including those with learning difficulties, to allow all pupils to make good progress.

The 2008 assessments at the end of Year 2 show standards in reading, writing and mathematics to be extremely low. This was a relatively small year group, with just over half of the pupils having learning difficulties. Assessments and the national testing of standards at the end of Year 6 show below-average attainment in English, mathematics and science. Given their low starting points in Key Stage 2, this represents satisfactory achievement.

Strong pastoral care helps to ensure pupils' enjoyment of school and their good behaviour and attitudes to learning. These contribute effectively to the progress they make in their learning. Careful management and good relationships ensure that pupils are generally attentive in lessons and want to do their best. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities around school, for example as 'Peace Makers' who help to sort out minor squabbles. Opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their academic learning are not as well developed. They are not sufficiently aware of how well they are doing or how they could improve their work. The sharing and use of curriculum targets, the constructive marking of work, and opportunities to discuss and evaluate learning in lessons are inconsistent.

The first year of the ISP encouraged the school to look far more closely at the collection and analysis of the data on progress, to identify where pupils are underachieving and to begin to put additional support in place. Specific actions have been planned and undertaken by leaders to address weaker areas in subjects and to provide further professional development for staff. However, many of these actions are recent and yet to be fully evaluated for their impact on raising achievement and standards. The school effectively draws on its good links with outside agencies, particularly to support more vulnerable pupils and their families. However, despite the school's determined efforts, its links with parents and carers and the encouragement given to them to support their children's learning are not as strong. The new Children's Centre and the setting up of a parent-teacher association are helping to develop stronger links. Given that the actions being taken by the school are starting to improve its performance, the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The opportunity they have to visit the Nursery and the Reception classes and to meet staff before they start school helps them to feel secure. Good links with the Children's Centre help the parents and carers of young children to realise the importance of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the considerable part they have to play in their children's development. Staff have created a welcoming and caring environment. Consistent routines help children to settle quickly into school. Adults place strong emphasis on developing children's social and emotional skills, which enables them to work and play well with each other and to form good relationships with the adults who care for them.

Children are assessed well on entry to the Nursery and Reception classes. Records are kept of their progress and this information is used to plan for their differing needs. However, this assessment data is not analysed sufficiently to identify clearly the progress of different groups of pupils and particular aspects of their learning that may require further development. Children enjoy a good range of well-planned activities in all the areas of learning. They enjoy the opportunities to choose from a selection of activities and confidently work either independently or with other children. At other times, they work alongside adults who develop their learning through conversation and asking questions. Opportunities, however, are sometimes missed to extend children's speaking skills.

Learning takes place indoors and outdoors, although lack of an outdoor covered area means that activities are restricted if the weather is bad. Plans are in place to develop this area. When children start school, their skills and abilities are below expectations for their age, particularly in language, writing and mathematical calculation. Overall, children make good progress. By the end of Reception they reach the levels expected at this age in most areas of learning. The focus on the development of their knowledge of sounds and letters, mathematical calculation and knowledge and understanding of the world has led to a marked improvement in these areas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the planned actions to raise achievement and standards and to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and learning are rigorously monitored and evaluated for their effectiveness.
- Ensure that teachers analyse and make full use of the information they record on pupils' progress to plan an appropriate level and style of work for all.
- Use marking, personal targets and evaluation in lessons to guide pupils in their learning and to show them how they can improve further.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The careful tracking of progress since the school's opening shows that pupils are achieving satisfactorily. Standards by the end of Year 6 are below average and the school is working, with

some success, to raise them. Pupils from different backgrounds, those with English as an additional language, and those with learning difficulties make broadly similar progress. Subject leaders have identified weaker areas within their subjects and have planned appropriate actions to raise achievement and standards. For example, there is now a full programme for teaching science in Key Stage 1 and a greater emphasis on investigation. Sounds and letters are taught systematically from Early Years Foundation Stage to Years 3 and 4. Staff work together on assessing writing, helping them to understand more fully how writing develops throughout the school. An analysis of test results has identified areas within mathematics that need greater attention.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school, as shown in the satisfactory but improving rate of attendance. They make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Relationships are good and pupils talk about initiatives such as the 'Circle of Friends', which helped them to make friends when they first started at the school. Behaviour is good, although a small proportion of pupils find it difficult to manage their own behaviour without additional support from an adult. Pupils say that they feel safe in school and know who to talk to if they have any concerns. They agree that there is very little bullying. The achievement of the Healthy School Award reflects pupils' good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle through healthy eating and participation in physical activities. As one pupil said, 'They exercise your muscles.' They all agree that they enjoy taking part in the various sporting activities that the school offers. Pupils make a good contribution to the community. They take their responsibilities as members of the school council and other roles seriously. Other children appreciate their efforts. Pupils learn to contribute to the wider community through their involvement in raising funds for charities, such as the NSPCC, and recognise that others sometimes need help and support. Given pupils' willingness to take on responsibility and the satisfactory progress made in acquiring literacy, numeracy and computer skills, they are adequately prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although good teaching is increasingly evident, the overall quality remains variable. Classes are generally managed well and relationships between staff and pupils are good. In better lessons teachers use a good range of learning strategies and resources to fully involve all pupils in their learning. Across the school the focus of the lesson is generally shared with pupils, but this is not always followed up with opportunities for pupils to discuss their learning and how well they have done. There is inconsistency in planning for pupils' different learning needs, which slows their progress. In particular, in general classroom teaching there is sometimes an insufficient level of challenge for more able pupils, and less able pupils, including those with learning difficulties, find the work too difficult. Teaching in the resource bases is good as the work is well focused on pupils' individual learning and personal needs. The quality of support given by teaching assistants to pupils in lessons is variable. Where this is more effective, assistants work closely with groups and take time to check that they understand what they are learning about and the activities they are involved in.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. The school has focused strongly on the development of pupils' basic skills in literacy and numeracy in order to improve standards. Consequently, links across subjects, so that pupils can develop and use their skills in a wide variety of contexts, are at an early stage of development. Links with other schools, such as the oracy project to raise standards in literacy and the sporting links with a local secondary school, are having a positive impact on pupils' learning and skills. The school's achievement of the national Activemark award reflects the wide range of physical activities offered. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of visits to places of interest, and clubs that support pupils' learning and contribute well to their personal skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Staff are committed to the care and welfare of the pupils. The school meets all the requirements to ensure that pupils are safe and secure. Effective systems are in place to identify the personal needs of pupils. The needs of vulnerable pupils and those who have specific difficulties with their learning or behaviour are generally well met. They, and their families, are skilfully supported by a dedicated inclusion team, which ensures that the provision for these pupils is well planned. Pupils who attend the resource bases make good progress in relation to their complex learning difficulties. Across the school, pupils' progress is regularly checked. However, assessment information is not yet analysed and used rigorously enough to plan for the learning needs of all individuals and groups of pupils. The school sets curriculum targets, but these are not individualised to give pupils a clear idea of how best to improve their own work. The use of these targets in lessons and pupils' understanding of their purpose is variable. Although work is marked regularly, the use of constructive comments to guide future learning is inconsistent.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leaders have been helped by the Improving Schools Programme. As a result, they have gained a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have identified appropriate priorities for raising achievement and standards, including the setting of challenging progress targets to aim for. This has enabled rates of progress to start to improve. Subject leaders' specific action plans have yet to be incorporated with the programme for raising attainment, to provide a more comprehensive school development plan. A programme of monitoring has begun to raise the quality of teaching and learning. Professional development has helped staff to begin to plan more fully for the needs of pupils with English as an additional language. Training for teaching assistants has enabled them to provide effective support for pupils who are underachieving in reading. Governors are supportive of the work of the school and have a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and where improvements are needed. They have recently allocated themselves to particular classes and subjects with a view to enhancing their monitoring role. The new Children's Centre has successfully begun to work closely with parents and carers, which is helping the school to engage more fully with the local community.

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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	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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	3
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	3

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	3
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	3

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

23 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gilbert Scott Primary School, South Croydon, CR2 8HD

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and you were always interesting to talk to, very polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things in which you take part. We have decided that Gilbert Scott Primary is a satisfactory school.

We liked these things the most.

- Parents and carers appreciate the work of the new Children's Centre.
- You get a good start to school in the Nursery and Reception.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and well looked after.
- You want to do your best in lessons.
- The two resource bases provide good support for those of you who find learning and behaviour difficult.
- You enjoy school and are all keen to keep fit and eat the right things.
- You are keen to take on responsibilities.

We have asked the school to work on the following things now.

- The school looks carefully at how well you are doing in lessons. It must use this information more to plan work that is just right for each one of you, neither too easy nor too hard. This will help you all to make the best progress possible.
- The teachers need to help you become aware of how well you are doing and how you could do even better. Marking, personal targets to aim for and more opportunities for you to talk about how well you are doing in lessons, would all help.
- The school has plans to help you all do even better in school. It must check that these plans are working, so that your lessons are both challenging and enjoyable, and that you all do as well as you can during your time at school.

We did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours faithfully

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector