

Gilmour (Southbank) Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104544
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	354345
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Judith Straw

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Stephen Athans
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Corcoran
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons and observed all teachers and staff in the nursery. Meetings were held with parents, groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, assessment information about pupils' progress, minutes of governing body meetings, safeguarding arrangements, policy and planning documents. They also considered 59 questionnaires received from parents and carers and 24 questionnaires received from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of boys, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and gifted and talented pupils to determine how successfully teaching and the curriculum meet their needs
- the achievement and progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- the rigour and accuracy of leaders and managers in evaluating the school's work.

Information about the school

This is an average size infant school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below average and very few pupils speak English as a second language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below that found nationally. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school has gained the Dyslexia Friendly School's Quality Mark, the Liverpool Healthy School Award and Investors in People. A new headteacher took up his post in January 2010.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. The measures to safeguard children, the partnerships that the school has with parents and others and the quality of care, guidance and support offered are outstanding. The school provides a happy, secure and exciting learning environment for its pupils. The varied and stimulating curriculum ensures that pupils enjoy their learning and thrive. Parents and carers are unanimously supportive of the school. One parent, speaking for many, wrote 'My children love going to school. I could not have asked for a better start to their education'.

Attainment is above average, sometimes well above average, and pupils progress well as they move through Early Years Foundation Stage and into Key Stage 1. There has been a decline in attainment at the end of Year 2 since 2007, even though it remains above average. Senior leaders have identified this and have taken effective steps to halt a declining trend and drive standards up even higher. Teaching and learning are consistently good and have a positive impact on pupils' good progress. Classroom practice is good, characterised by a brisk pace and lively teaching. Just occasionally, pupils find work a little too easy. Teachers set interesting and stimulating tasks, but do not always give pupils enough feedback on how to improve their work to help them reach challenging targets.

The school takes excellent care of its pupils and safeguarding procedures are exemplary. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are exceptionally well supported so that they make similar progress to their peers. Children are keen, enthusiastic and enjoy coming to school. They are polite and friendly. They have an excellent understanding for their age of how to stay healthy and keep safe. Attendance is average and the school has robust measures in place to monitor the individual attendance of every child.

The new headteacher has already demonstrated clear purpose and vision for the school's improvement and, together with the deputy headteacher, is leading a strong and effective staff team. Staff are held accountable for the progress children make in their classes, but subject leaders are less involved in monitoring the areas for which they are responsible. Some development planning lacks sharpness of focus and measurable goals. Recent self-evaluation has been too generous in some areas, but is increasingly accurate. The school has succeeded in improving the attainment of all pupils, and particularly boys, in writing, which was an issue at the last inspection, and has reversed the declining trend. The capacity to improve is, therefore, good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise the quality of teaching so that it is consistently the best it can be, by:
 - ensuring that in all lessons pupils are challenged to excel in their learning
 - giving oral and written feedback that informs pupils clearly what they have done well and what they need to do next, linked to their targets.
- Sharpen management systems, by:
 - providing subject leaders with more opportunities to evaluate the impact of their curricular areas on raising attainment and accelerating progress
 - monitoring all development planning so that improvements are clear and measurable.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

In lessons, pupils are interested in their work and most of them, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. Progress is currently best in reading and writing and slightly slower in mathematics. The school is aware of this and is developing strategies to address this difference. The stimulating learning environment ensures that pupils are keen to learn and highly motivated to try new things and are excited by the activities on offer. Pupils in Year 2 were looking at 'silly poems' and trying to explain what makes them funny or silly and why they are appealing. Practical activities make sure that pupils make good progress in their key skills. Pupils are confident in their use of computers. Pupils are very happy to discuss their work and most speak openly and confidently to visitors.

Pupils are lively and excited by school and enjoy their learning. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils can be thoughtful, caring and responsive when they need to be. They are involved in making some decisions about school and some took part in the recent interviews to select the new headteacher. They eagerly participate in many after-school activities provided by the children's university. Daily 'wake and shake' sessions are hugely enjoyed by staff and pupils alike. They are keen to participate in and enjoy local events, such as working with gardeners at a local hall and themed weeks, for example, the annual multi-cultural and health and safety weeks, which broaden their horizons and allows them to welcome many visitors into school. They are learning about their local and the wider national and international communities. Their good social awareness, together with their above-average attainment, ensures they are well prepared for the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good and staff work hard to enthuse and inspire their pupils. Teachers have high expectations which promote good progress, behaviour and attitudes. The pace is brisk in most lessons and consistently ensures that pupils are motivated and actively encouraged. Teachers have strong expert knowledge and the teaching of reading and writing is particularly strong. Questioning is good and pupils are encouraged to explain their answers in full sentences, which helps to develop communication skills effectively. There is excellent team work between teachers and the team of highly effective teaching assistants which promotes the learning of different groups particularly well. Where teaching is less successful it is because work is not always planned to sufficiently meet the needs of pupils so that all can achieve their best. Marking is done conscientiously, but does not always give enough advice on how pupils can improve their work and reach their targets.

The curriculum provides imaginative and creative experiences which contribute well to pupils' development, learning and well-being. Each morning, activities start with a 'playing to learn' session so that pupils are actively engaged in learning from the moment they enter the classroom. Good links are made across a range of subjects which enable pupils to practise reading, writing and numeracy in many different ways. There are good opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology (ICT) and the curriculum is further enhanced by expert teaching in music and French. Overall, the curriculum meets the needs of most pupils well. There is an excellent range of enrichment opportunities during the school day and after school through the children's university.

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Every child is known as an individual and valued. The school works closely with parents and carers and many outside agencies to enable them to provide the best possible provision. Transition arrangements are highly effective. The pre-school groups help parents, carers and children before they enter the nursery; transition from the Nursery class to the Reception Year and later Key Stage 1 is well managed so that pupils move seamlessly through the school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has refined the tracking system and has a clear knowledge of the rate of progress pupils are making. The school has halted the decline in attainment at the end of Year 2 and data show that progress is now accelerating. Not enough middle leaders are involved in measuring the impact of actions taken on promoting achievement. Governors know the school well. They achieve a good balance between giving support and challenging the school to do even better. The governing body encompasses a wide range of expertise and local knowledge and uses this information well. The school improvement plan accurately identifies key objectives, but the criteria for judging success are not always sharply enough focussed or measurable.

The school has an excellent range of partnerships with other providers and with parents. The quality of its work as a full extended services school has received national recognition. Services provided include opportunities for parents and carers and members of the community to enjoy courses in art, ICT, first aid, Tai Chi and many others. The Citizens Advice Bureau run consultations and there are many mothers and babies groups as well as a much appreciated breakfast club.

The school promotes equal opportunities well and at the time of the inspection its safeguarding systems were exemplary. The school has a positive approach to promoting community cohesion and plans to develop further national and international links.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The uniqueness of each child is recognised. Children enter the nursery with skills in line with what is expected for their age and make good progress, so that many enter Year 1 having exceeded the early learning goals set for them. Children achieve well in both the Nursery and Reception classes. Adults support learning well and children thrive in the exciting learning environment and the excellent outdoor areas. Plans to develop the use of the outdoor learning areas even further are a priority. Teaching is good and sometimes outstanding. During the inspection, children in the nursery were looking at their newly-hatched butterflies and the gasps of excitement were palpable. Staff observe children at work and regularly make assessments about their small steps in learning, although sometimes opportunities are missed during times when children choose their own activities. Provision for the safety and welfare of children is excellent. The provision is well led. Adults are well qualified and have a clear understanding of the strengths of what they offer and the areas to develop further.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers were unanimous in their approval of the school and the commitment

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of the staff. Many commented on the quality of teaching and the high quality of care their children receive. There is particular praise for the welcome children receive when they enter the nursery. Parents and carers appreciate the many opportunities they have to come into school and the extent to which they are consulted. A few said that they would like a little more information on the progress their children are making. The school is always willing to provide parents and carers with detailed feedback on their children's work.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gilmour (Southbank) Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 59 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 232 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	50	85	9	15	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	52	88	7	12	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	46	78	13	22	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	85	8	14	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	51	86	7	12	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	85	9	15	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	80	11	19	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	45	76	8	14	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	73	15	25	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	66	19	32	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	66	17	29	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	43	73	15	25	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	54	92	5	8	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



26 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gilmour (Southbank) Infant School, Liverpool, L19 9AR

I am writing to thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school this week. We really enjoyed our visit. Yours is a good school and does some excellent work. We agree with you that it is a happy, safe school where everyone works hard and gets on well with each other. These are the things we thought were good.

- You all make good progress in your learning and achieve well.
- You behave well and feel very safe in school.
- You have a lovely environment with super displays of your work and excellent gardens and areas to work and play outside.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to be fit and healthy.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants work hard to make sure you enjoy lessons and make good progress.
- There are lots of interesting things for you to do as well as lessons. We loved watching your wake and shake sessions in the mornings.
- All the adults take excellent care of you.
- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher manage the school well.

Even in good schools there are ways of making them better. We have asked your teachers to make sure work is always set at a level which helps you to reach the highest standards and to give you more advice on how you can improve it when they mark your books. We have also suggested that some subject leaders get more involved in looking at how well the school is doing and in planning improvements.

You can help by doing your best and telling teachers if you find work is too hard or too easy.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Judith Straw

Lead inspector

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