

Gilmour Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	145430
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	286973
Inspection dates	27 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Mrs A Dawson

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	241
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr K Sloan
Headteacher	Mr P J Gibbons
Date of previous school inspection	November 2002
School address	Whitehedge Road Garston Liverpool L19 1RD
Telephone number	0151 4274682
Fax number	0151 4940905

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector

Description of the school

This large junior school serves a socially mixed area, which has pockets of economic disadvantage. Most pupils transfer to the school from the nearby infant school at the end of Year 2. There is an above average proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Nearly all pupils on roll are of White British heritages.

The school is an Eco school and has achieved the Activemark Gold, the Artsmark Gold and the Healthy Schools Award. The school takes part in the Comenius Project and as such has extensive links with European schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school because everyone involved with it works enthusiastically and purposefully to ensure pupils get the most out of their education. Because of the rich provision on offer and the high quality teaching, pupils achieve outstandingly well and develop into happy and confident young learners. The school enjoys an extremely good reputation with the parents and the local community. A comment such as 'this is an excellent school where pupils develop strong social as well as academic skills and benefit from an impressive range of out of school activities' is typical.

Pupils make outstanding progress because they are taught exceptionally well in a vibrant learning environment and provided with a vast range of exciting learning opportunities. Right from the start, pupils are presented with very carefully planned activities that promote their thinking and social skills, helping them to become independent learners. High quality teaching builds pupils basic skills of reading, writing, mathematics and ICT very well. This is underpinned by extremely good relationships and high expectations.

By the end of Year 6 pupils reach significantly above average standards overall in English and mathematics and outstanding standards in science. However, the school recognises that standards in writing are a continued area for development. Although improved this year because of purposeful intervention strategies and excellent marking standards, they are still lower than in reading and mathematics and could be higher for some pupils in each year group.

The school provides outstanding care, support and guidance for all of its pupils. There are a significant proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, a few who are particularly vulnerable and some who are gifted and talented. High quality planned support for learning means that all pupils achieve just as well as others. The excellent care and support they receive is the foundation for their success and reflected in the pupils' enjoyment in school.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupil talk enthusiastically about the many opportunities they have to go on visits and trips. They enjoy healthy food provided for them at break times and lunchtimes. The many sporting opportunities they participate in results in teams and individuals gaining awards both at local and national level. Pupils have well developed social skills and develop responsible attitudes to recycling and global issues such as 'fair trade'. The extremely vibrant curriculum makes very good provision for example in the arts and problem solving activities such as mini-enterprise tasks. The extensive links that pupils have with others in European and African schools promotes a very good understanding of themselves and others. This results in a school, which is happy because the talents of all pupils are encouraged. Is it any wonder that pupils achieve so well?

There is outstanding leadership and management. The headteacher leads the school exceptionally well. Improvement from the last inspection is extremely good and there is excellent capacity for further improvement. There is strong and dedicated leadership and from the senior and subject leaders. The governing body is effective in supporting and shaping the direction of the school. Advantage is taken of local and

national initiatives to extend learning opportunities. The school benefits from the very good partnerships with local schools and colleges. There is a shared vision that pupils should have the best opportunities they can provide to succeed and they do.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of writing for some pupils in Years 3 to 6.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' attainments on entry to Year 3 vary from year to year but the majority are generally above average. Most make good and at times outstanding progress in English, mathematics and science from Years 3 to 6. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards that are significantly above average in English and mathematics and outstanding in science. The school has maintained high standards over the last three years, has met challenging targets and improved its performance each year. Writing has been a focus for improvement as standards are lower than in reading, which is also the case nationally. However, although improved this year, some pupils could still achieve higher standards. Provision is matched to help all achieve equally well, from the most vulnerable to the gifted and talented. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress as others. School projects and additional learning opportunities ensure that those who have a particular gift or talent are stretched. Pupils achieve just as well in some other subjects because of the high quality provision the school provides. There are many examples of excellent achievement and high standards in drama, art, physical education, design and technology and some good examples of pupils' work in ICT.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being is outstanding. They greatly enjoy school, in the words of one pupil 'school is brilliant and all the teachers are superb'. This is reflected in pupils' very good attendance. They eagerly participate in lessons and the many extra-curricular activities provided for them. They are not afraid to try out new things because they feel emotionally secure, knowing that teachers will encourage and help them. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is extremely good. Behaviour is exemplary and bullying and anti-social behaviour is rare. Pupils know how to keep safe and adopt healthy lifestyles. They take regular exercise, all of them have swimming lessons and they participate in a very wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities, and local school events. This is evident in the Healthy Schools Award, the Sportsmark and the three trophy cabinets full of awards for excellence in sports and participation in local and national events. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to have a say in the development of the school. Members of the school council take their work seriously. As a result of their efforts to promote anti-bullying strategies, two of them have won a trip to visit Anne Frank's House in Amsterdam. In school the council have banned the sale of

crisps and improved playtime provision and requested bike shelters. The Eco committee effectively promotes recycling.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is excellent. The success of teaching lies in teachers' consistently and effectively implementing whole school strategies for learning and in their having high expectations of what pupils can achieve. For instance, 'to do anything well you need the skill and the will' as a phrase on display reflects that teachers are always encouraging pupils to learn and 'have a go' at all activities of offer. Relationships are excellent and based on mutual trust and respect. Consequently, many pupils gain skills for instance in music or become adept in sport, the arts or chess as well as achieving well academically. The outstanding teaching is exciting, motivating and challenges pupils to learn. Discussion and questioning in lessons is very effectively used to assess if pupils understand the important points and provide help when necessary. Teachers work very well together, sharing strengths to make the best use of their expertise. The staff assess pupils' performance rigorously so that lessons challenge the children to make maximum progress. There is some exceptionally good quality marking in writing, for example, which has helped to raise pupils' achievement this year.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstandingly enriched and exciting curriculum. There are so many learning opportunities provided for pupils to enjoy, develop their skills and motivate them to learn. Pupils eagerly take advantage of all these activities on offer, saying for instance, 'there are lots of clubs and you can go on Kidswheels holidays'. As a result, they achieve outstandingly well. The exceptionally good links with high schools and colleges provide additional sporting opportunities and the opportunity for pupils to develop business skills. Life-long learning skills are encouraged. Pupils practice their thinking and basic skills exceptionally well as they participate, for instance in mini-enterprise weeks and raise monies for charities. Extensive links with European schools and an African school, French teaching as well as strong personal social and health education helps pupils gain an increasing social awareness of themselves and others.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care and support for its pupils, both in promoting their academic skills and in supporting their personal and social development. Parents overwhelmingly support this view. Procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are in place. Pupils say they 'feel safe and there is always someone to talk to'. All pupils are cared for equally well which is reflected in the aim of the headteacher 'to give every child every chance'. Academic support is extremely good overall, ranging from support for vulnerable pupils to those who are gifted or talented. Interventions to support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are

successful in ensuring they achieve equally well as other groups. There is very good liaison with outside agencies when necessary. Targets set for pupils are regularly reviewed. Pupils know and understand personal targets very well through shared discussion. The school has outstanding links with other schools and agencies and transition arrangements into school and to the next phase of education are very good.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The headteacher leads the school outstandingly well and is successful in providing pupils with 'as many opportunities as possible to succeed'. He is supported by an exceptional deputy headteacher who has organised the charity 'Kidswheels'. Because of his work, for which he has been awarded the MBE, pupils and families from school and the locality benefit from many holidays and educational outings. This is typical of the rich provision that the school offers and reflects the dedication of the staff. Many willingly give up their time out of school hours to promote children's learning. This is recognised by parents expressed in comments such as 'I have nothing but praise for the teaching staff and their commitment to the children'. The senior leadership team is enthusiastic and continually seeking to improve school provision. They monitor the work of the school thoroughly and the views of governors, parents and pupils are taken into account and acted upon. The subject leaders know the school's strengths and quickly identify where improvements are to be made. For example, the provision and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and the quality of pupils' writing have significantly improved since the last inspection. The continuing professional development for teachers is very well established. The staff keep up-to-date and benefit from sharing their expertise. They also play a leading role in mentoring teachers in training. Parents feel fully involved in school life and there is a good take up of courses offered to parents for example ICT to help them improve their skills. The effective and knowledgeable governing body, fulfil their statutory responsibilities well and hold the school to account. The school provides excellent value for money.

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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	NA
The effectiveness and efficiency of boarding provision	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

¹ 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.

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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



28 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gilmour Junior School, Garston, Liverpool, L19 1RD

Thank you very much for making me welcome in your school. It really was a pleasure to walk around the school, join you in lessons and speak to you, some of your parents and people who work at school. I especially enjoyed watching Year 6 rehearse their play. Thank you boys in Year 6 for your guitar playing. The links you have with other schools in Europe and in Africa are impressive. At the end of my visit I came to the conclusion that you attend an excellent school. The school staff care for you so well and you told me how much you enjoy your lessons.

You sensibly take part in lots of exercise and choose healthy snacks at break. I think you participate in an exceptionally good range of visits and out of school activities and enjoy the many interesting and exciting opportunities that you have to help you learn. I noticed all the awards you have won on display in the trophy cabinets. This is because your teachers work so hard and they will continue to help you. Of course, you play a very important part in helping the school to improve by your work and the responsible way you get involved in school life. I agree with your teachers that you have improved the quality of your writing this year because you have clear targets to work towards and get lots of help to improve. I think if you keep on working hard you will improve even more. Just do that little bit better in writing and you will help your school to improve even more.

Best wishes for the future

Anna Dawson

Lead inspector