

Gillingstool Primary School

Gillingstool, Thornbury, Bristol, BS35 2EG

Inspection dates

21–22 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Parents and teachers are pleased at the way the school has developed under the leadership of the headteacher. Improvements to teaching and achievement have come about because of his determination that all pupils will achieve well.
- The school has developed exciting ways for pupils to learn outdoors. This has improved pupils' problem-solving skills and given them confidence. They have more opportunities to work together and this has led to improvements in their speaking and listening.
- Children in the Reception class are making rapid progress in all their learning. They are becoming confident writers.
- Pupils achieve well and make good progress. Standards at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have risen in reading, writing and mathematics and are now typically in line with the national average.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. They are supported by skilled teaching assistants.
- Teaching across the school is good. Teachers challenge pupils and ask them to 'dig deep' and try their best. Pupils rise to the challenge and make good progress in lessons.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and in the playground. They work and play with pupils from the special school which shares the site. They are learning to respect the ways in which people have different abilities.
- The school has good systems for keeping pupils safe and pupils feel very safe in school. The school's '3 step' way is effective in solving any problems pupils may have.
- Governors have a good understanding of pupils' progress and how well the school is doing. They visit regularly and question leaders about the improvements they are making.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In Key Stage 2 some pupils have gaps in their knowledge of spelling and grammar. This hampers their ability to write accurately and fluently and present their work well. Progress in writing is slower than in reading and mathematics.
- Teachers mark pupils' writing in their English books and give guidance on how to improve. However, they do not check written work in other subjects closely enough to make sure that pupils act on this guidance.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons or part of lessons, three of which were observed jointly with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with school leaders, groups of teachers and three members of the governing body. Account was taken of the responses in 29 questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- Inspectors talked to a group of pupils and observed them at break and lunchtime. They looked at the work in pupils' books and heard some pupils read.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation including the school's information about pupils' progress. They also looked at school procedures to keep pupils safe. They reviewed the support the school gives teachers to improve their work, including targets for performance management.
- Informal discussions were held with parents on the playground. Inspectors took account of parents' views in this way and also through the 28 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. One letter was received during the inspection and was also taken into consideration by inspectors.

Inspection team

Wendy Marriott, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Susan Costelloe

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- Early years provision in the Reception class is full time.
- Four pupils in 10 are known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or looked after by the local authority). This is above the national average.
- Three pupils in 10 are known to be disabled or have special educational needs. This is also above the national average.
- Pupils enter or leave the school during the school year more often than they do in most schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards set for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has moved into a new building which it shares with a special school. The two schools are led and managed separately but they share some facilities and activities.
- The school has recently been recognised by the Department for Education for the way it uses extra government funding to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- The school is a Wetlands Wildlife Trust Beacon School and supports other schools to develop outdoor education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the quality of the teaching to improve pupils' progress in writing by:
 - improving the teaching of spelling and grammar for pupils in Key Stage 2
 - ensuring that teachers check that pupils are following their advice on how to improve their work in all subjects where they do written work
 - improving pupils' handwriting so that they can express their ideas quickly in well-presented work.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- All leaders share the headteacher's commitment to ensure that every pupil achieves well. The headteacher has the respect of parents because of the improvements he has made to behaviour and the quality of teaching. Teachers see him as a knowledgeable leader of teaching and value his advice.
- School leaders recognise that they have further work to do to improve pupils' skills in writing in Key Stage 2. They are tackling this by arranging good quality training for teachers in the teaching of writing and by putting in place new ways of teaching grammar.
- Leaders make regular checks on teaching and pupils' progress. The judgements they make about priorities for improvement are accurate. Action to raise standards in reading and speaking in Years 1 and 2 and in the Reception class has been successful.
- Subjects are led by teams of teachers working together. This works well and has led to all teachers evaluating the success of the school and planning for future improvements. Work to develop the new curriculum is progressing well.
- Leaders plan very effectively for the use of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils. This year the school has been identified as one of the most improved schools in the country for the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils. One-to-one tuition, homework support clubs and specialist support for mathematics are contributing to the progress this group of pupils make. The school also uses the funding to overcome possible financial barriers to full inclusion. Music tuition is available to all pupils who receive this funding.
- The school puts a strong emphasis on outdoor education. The outdoor learning sessions are improving pupils' confidence and their ability to solve problems. Improvements are being made in standards of speaking and listening as pupils co-operate on outdoor projects.
- The curriculum is planned well around themes and topics which are relevant to pupils' lives. Bristol and London have been chosen as topics for the opportunities this gives to explore the history of the cities and their different cultures. This helps to develop well pupils' understanding and respect for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils are helped to succeed in reading through the special events such as 'book fortnight'. Stories and performances encourage their interest in books.
- The school promotes the spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding of the pupils well. The pupils' understanding of different cultures both within and beyond Britain is good. They write to a partner school in Uganda and visit different parts of Britain which extends their understanding of life in parts of the country very different to their home town.
- Equality of opportunity is actively promoted in the school through the range of support given to pupils based around their individual need. Leaders have secured the good behaviour of pupils and resolutely tackle any lack of tolerance which could lead to discrimination.
- The school's systems for the safeguarding of pupils meet statutory requirements. There are very strong systems for recognising pupils who may be at risk of harm. All members of staff are well trained to do this and actively follow the school's procedures to keep pupils safe.
- The local authority has supported the school in making improvements by providing training opportunities for teachers. It has also supported accurate assessment, particularly in writing. The local authority is now using the expertise leaders have in analysing data, to help other schools.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body knows the school well and individual governors visit regularly. Governors have a clear picture of improvements in achievement. They explore the school's information about the progress pupils are making and review the impact of pupil premium funding regularly. They ask leaders challenging questions and are aware of the need to improve standards in pupils' grammar. Governors supported the headteacher when he has had to tackle weak teaching in the past and are confident now that teaching is good. They check that pay progression for teachers is based on performance. Governors receive good information from the headteacher, but they also go into classrooms and talk to pupils around the school. The school's finances are managed well. Governors are rightly proud of the impact of their plans for the use of the pupil premium funding. They keep up to date by attending training.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In lessons pupils talk about their learning and work well together. They quickly respond to teachers calling for their attention and listen with concentration.
- Parents, pupils and most staff feel that behaviour is good. Reminders around the building promote good behaviour and make expectations clear.
- Pupils are proud of their school and take good care of equipment and the new building. However, the writing books of some of the pupils in Years 3 to 6 show that they do not take enough pride in their work. Some work is not well presented.
- Pupils behave well and are friendly to each other in the playground. The school council voted for 'friendly Fridays' and 'together Tuesdays' so that pupils can play with their friends from the special school. As one pupil said, 'We learn from each other.'
- Older pupils show responsible attitudes when managing the library and helping to run the book fair. They operate an enterprise group to collect money for the school and for charity.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe in school because of the secure building and the number of staff that supervise them. They understand about risk and the school has taught them to manage it. Using a '1, 2, 3' system they can make a decision about when to talk to an adult about something worrying them.
- Pupils understand different forms of bullying, but say that it is very rare in the school and dealt with quickly. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe on the internet.
- The school works closely with families and welfare agencies to promote good attendance. However, overall attendance is still below average. Most pupils attend regularly. A proportion of pupils have lower attendance and the school is following this up rigorously with the support of the local authority.

The quality of teaching is good

- In Years 1 and 2, where pupils are learning phonics (the sounds that letters make), teachers use every lesson to remind pupils of spelling patterns and punctuation rules. This improves the quality of their written work and, as a result, pupils make good progress in writing.
- Teachers plan work in mathematics at the right level for different groups but in a way which does not limit the progress pupils can make. Teachers typically encourage pupils to 'dig deep' and keep trying. In a mathematics lesson, the teacher used a 'Ready, steady, go' approach, and pupils were able to start work at a level where they felt confident. Yet they all rose to the challenge to move up at least one level. They worked quickly and with good concentration.
- Reading skills are taught well and pupils make good progress in reading. Teachers also develop pupils' love of reading through special events. In book fortnight there were a variety of events to stimulate reading. Bedtime stories, a performance of *Wind in the Willows* and drama workshops enthused pupils and encouraged them to read widely.
- Teachers use skilful questioning and short tasks to check that all pupils understand what is being taught. In this way, no time is wasted and when they start their work in lessons pupils make good progress.
- Although improving, the progress pupils make in writing is not as strong in Years 3 to 6 as it is in the early years and Years 1 and 2. As a result of some weaker teaching in the past, pupils have gaps in their knowledge of spelling, grammar and punctuation. This hinders their ability to write fluently and with confidence. Teaching is not yet outstanding because these gaps are not being filled quickly enough.
- Teachers mark English books carefully and tell pupils how to improve. They do not check other written work as thoroughly. As a result, pupils repeat their mistakes and standards of work are lower than in their English books.
- Very skilled teaching assistants help all pupils to learn well, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. They put learning into familiar contexts. Planning a party helped some pupils to understand why they needed to add amounts of money accurately. Teaching assistants are quick to spot pupils who are making mistakes and they step in to give them extra help.

- Homework is set regularly. Homework clubs give pupils every chance to complete their homework and teachers are rigorous in following up any that is missed.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- When children enter the Reception class their development is generally below that which is typical for their age. In 2013 a very low proportion of them reached a good level of development by the end of the year. However, in 2014 the proportion of the children reaching a good level of development rose to above national levels. Children in the current Reception class are making good progress.
- Since the previous inspection, attainment at the end of Year 2 has improved and standards are now broadly in line with standards nationally. In 2014 many more pupils reached the higher Level 3 in mathematics and reading than has been the case in the past.
- Currently pupils in Year 2 are catching up after their slow start in Reception. While in Year 1 they made much better progress in all subjects.
- By the end of Year 6 almost all pupils make the progress expected of them and many make progress at a faster rate than is typical for all pupils nationally. More pupils reach at least the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics than do so nationally.
- The most able pupils make good progress and go on to reach the higher levels by the end of Year 6 with some reaching the highest Level 6 in mathematics.
- A particular strength of the school is the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. Their progress and attainment have been on an improving trend for three years. By the end of Year 6 in 2014, the rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils were stronger than those of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. This strong progress has led to almost all of the group reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2014, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was broadly one term behind the attainment of other pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics because they had lower starting points. When compared with other pupils in the school, disadvantaged pupils were two terms behind in mathematics and reading, but a year behind in writing. The trend of improving progress is continuing for current pupils in the school.
- Pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs also make good progress by the end of Year 6. Many more of this group of pupils reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics than do so nationally.
- Across the school, rates of progress are consistently good except in writing where some of the pupils in Years 3 to 6 are not progressing as fast as in other subjects. This is because of their weaker skills in grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Standards of speaking and listening are rising, particularly in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2. This is because of the opportunities pupils get to work collaboratively in class and particularly through the outdoor education programme. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are developing stronger skills and confidence with problem solving as they benefit from this programme.

The early years provision

is good

- Children in the Reception class are making rapid progress in all areas of learning, particularly writing. They write their letters accurately and use the sounds that letters make to help them to spell words. The teacher has high expectations of what children can do and creates opportunities for writing indoors and outdoors. Children were seen practising their writing with mud and paintbrushes. Because learning was fun they persisted and made progress in name writing.
- Although most children start in Reception with lower levels of spoken language than would be typical for their age, they are now making good progress. Outdoor learning in Forest Skills is being used to widen the children's vocabulary. Teachers and teaching assistants guide and prompt children to talk together and co-operate.
- Children's knowledge of number and shape is developing because of sharply focused teaching and the chances they are given to apply their skills. Children were seen independently building a fire engine out of found wood and wheels. They carefully measured the pieces of wood against each other to see if they would fit.

- Children in the Reception class behave very well and learn in a safe and secure environment. Routines are well established and have made the children independent. They keep themselves safe outdoors using tools and equipment sensibly. They know exactly where things go when they tidy up.
- The teacher in the Reception class has widened the opportunities for the children to learn by working very closely with the special school Reception class teacher. The children play together very well and benefit from helping each other.
- Parents are positive about the good start their children are given to their education. Links between school and home are good. Targets are set for children around all aspects of their development so that parents are fully engaged in their child's learning.
- The early years' leader and the Reception class teacher share a vision for continued improvement. They are now helping other schools to develop the Forest Skills programme.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109126
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	449560

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	171
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Martin Trueman
Headteacher	Mr Clive Riches
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 May 2010
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