

Gayton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105034
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	377165
Inspection dates	2–3 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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	219
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Kathryn Youngson
Headteacher	Mark Whitehill
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 10 lessons taught by seven teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including pupils' progress and attainment data, the school's planning documents, policies, procedures and records, and documentation relating to safeguarding pupils. They reviewed information provided by parents and carers in 114 completed questionnaires. They also took into account the views of pupils and staff expressed in the questionnaires they returned.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The school's capacity to sustain and build on the high achievement seen in assessment outcomes for pupils over the past five years.
- The effectiveness of leaders' actions to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better across the school.
- The impact of curriculum developments that have taken place in the school since the previous inspection on pupils' enjoyment and interest in learning and on their development of a broad range of skills across the areas of learning.

Information about the school

The school is slightly smaller than most other primary schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a very small proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Since the school's previous inspection, there have been several staffing changes, mainly resulting from retirements, and a new deputy headteacher was appointed in January 2009. The school building has been refurbished and extended to provide a new reception area and offices, a new classroom, additional resource areas and an enlarged classroom in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Since its previous inspection the school has achieved Healthy School status and has become an Investor in People. It has also gained the Active Mark, the School Travel Plan award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Pre-school provision and a before- and after-school care club are provided on site by an independent company. These are subject to separate inspection by Ofsted and reports are available on the Ofsted website.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. Very effective leadership has ensured continuous and ongoing improvements, enabling the school to sustain and build on its history of high achievement and, in most respects, pupils' outstanding personal development.

Most children join the Reception class with the skills that are expected for their age group. From a flying start in the extremely effective Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils make outstanding progress through the school and go on to reach high levels of attainment by the end of Year 6. This has been a consistent picture for the last five years. Very effective support provided for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities enables them to make the same outstanding progress as their peers and to be fully included in all aspects of school life.

The high overall quality of provision, including excellent teaching, is a key contributory factor to pupils' outstanding achievement and their exceptionally good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school is aware that more needs to be done to ensure that its creative curriculum, particularly work on topics and themes, consistently supports the development of pupils' skills in other subjects as effectively as it currently does in English and mathematics. Pastoral care is excellent and pupils respond extremely well to this, with older children taking on many responsibilities around the school, including acting as buddies to younger ones. The latter initiative is exceptionally well promoted and significantly enhances the school's supportive family ethos. Pupils show an excellent understanding of issues around personal safety and healthy living. High attendance and excellent punctuality testify to the school's effective partnership with parents and carers.

The headteacher provides clearly focused strategic leadership. Supported by an effective deputy headteacher, he has created a very strong team ethos, with a clear focus on continuous school improvement. Recent restructuring of staff teams has further strengthened leadership and management and has helped to ensure that very effective middle leaders contribute strongly to taking the school forward. Leaders are not complacent. Areas for development and improvement are clearly and correctly identified and the school takes decisive actions to address them. For example, the previous inspection identified the need to raise the attainment of more-able pupils in writing and this has been addressed rigorously and successfully; the overall standard of pupils' written work is now very good and the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher level in writing at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2011 was

significantly above the national average. Extremely accurate self-evaluation is based on systematic monitoring and rigorous assessment, with a clear analysis of need and outcomes. All of these factors, together with the many skills and talents of staff and leaders, including a very knowledgeable and effective governing body, combine to demonstrate that the school has outstanding capacity to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reinforce and enhance the effectiveness of the school's creative curriculum by ensuring that topic work gives pupils sufficient opportunities to develop a wide range of skills for all subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils' attitudes to school are extremely positive. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are responsive learners, interested and absorbed in lessons. They enjoy working with a partner or in a group; this is helping them to develop their thinking and to offer their ideas with confidence. Their concentration and study skills are developing very well; they listen carefully and see tasks through to completion and they are increasingly able to evaluate the quality of their own work with accuracy. Across the school, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is high; it was significantly above the national average at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 in 2011. High attainment and excellent progress were seen in lessons, in the school's assessment data and in pupils' current work. Pupils' overall achievement is excellent and this is matched by their interest and enjoyment in learning.

Pupils form very good relationships with each other and with the adults in school and they say they are confident help is on hand if they encounter any problems. Pupils, parents and carers strongly agree that school is a place of safety. Pupils participate enthusiastically in the range of activities provided to support their health, fitness and well-being. They enjoy taking responsibility, for example as influential school councillors. They are enthusiastic fundraisers for charities at home and abroad. All of this, together with their excellent basic skills, contributes extremely well to preparing them for the next stages in their education. Pupils show an excellent understanding of the sound moral values the school promotes and this is reflected in their good behaviour and considerate attitudes.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1

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

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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Excellent teaching is contributing very strongly to pupils' learning and progress and to their personal development. Lessons are planned very well to take the range of learners' needs into account and the pace of learning is brisk; this is helping pupils to progress speedily. Imaginative teaching strategies are often used to very good effect, bringing learning alive for pupils. This was the case, for example, in a lesson on report writing in Key Stage 2, where pupils, acting in role as journalists reporting a third-world flood disaster, interviewed a property developer who was trying to purchase the affected land. High-quality work was produced, with pupils and staff totally absorbed in exploring complex issues together. Regular and very effective assessment means that class teachers have a clear overview of progress and this helps them identify pupils who may be underachieving and those who require extra support. Interventions are timely and effective. Well-trained and skilled teaching assistants work in professional partnership with class teachers and contribute extremely well to all pupils' learning and progress.

The curriculum enables pupils to establish very good skills in reading, writing, mathematics and information and communication technology and meets their learning needs in these areas extremely well. Much work has been done in recent times to bring subjects together, in order to deliver the curriculum through topics and themes that are interesting, relevant and engaging for pupils. The school is aware that the curriculum should consistently support the development of a balance of skills such as those required for geography and history. Recent evaluations have shown some inconsistencies in this respect, and work is under way to review curriculum planning in order to rectify this. The curriculum is well enriched by opportunities for pupils to develop skills in sports, the arts and two modern foreign languages. A range of visitors and visits, including several residential trips, contributes very effectively to promoting pupils' academic, personal, social, health and citizenship education. Excellent teaching with well chosen support strategies for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensure they enjoy full access to learning and are included in everything on offer.

Pastoral care is excellent and the school works sensitively to support pupils and their families whose circumstances make them most vulnerable. This is helping to break down barriers to learning and progress that pupils occasionally encounter. Attendance and punctuality are promoted extremely effectively. Effective links with local high schools benefit pupils at transition to secondary education. Transition arrangements between classes within the school are extremely well managed and very supportive for pupils. The school works in close partnership with the on-site pre-school provision and this supports children's smooth induction to the Reception class

very effectively. The school collaborates extremely well with a wide range of agencies that support pupils' health, welfare, social and learning needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
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?

Staff and governors wholeheartedly share the headteacher's firm commitment to continuous improvement and his ambition to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils. Team leaders and subject leaders contribute very effectively to ensuring the quality of provision and to helping drive forward improvement initiatives. The school plans appropriate actions for ensuring that pupils' high attainment and their excellent learning and progress rates are sustained. The information gained from regular and rigorous reviews of pupils' progress is used very well to plan 'next steps' in learning. The supportive, actively involved and exceptionally well-informed governing body challenges and holds the school to account very effectively.

Parents and carers appreciate all that is done to support their children's welfare. Pupils benefit from the effective partnership between home and school, which is supported by good communications, including regular newsletters, workshops, meetings and questionnaires. The school complies fully with statutory requirements for safeguarding, health and safety and child protection through well-managed procedures and through an ongoing review of their effectiveness. Its inclusive ethos supports excellent promotion of equal opportunities and access to educational entitlement. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated. The school contributes well to community cohesion through a good range of partnerships in the community and some developing international links. Partnerships with other schools, including a nearby special school, are particularly beneficial in helping to support pupils' personal and academic development. Partnerships with sports providers are very strong and contribute extremely well to the development of pupils' physical skills and to their health and fitness.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2

The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1
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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make excellent progress and develop very positive attitudes, becoming happy, interested learners. As a result, by the end of the Reception Year, most children are working above the expected levels for their age. All of the children, including the more-able, make excellent progress in relation to their starting points, because ongoing assessment is accurate and activities are very well matched to their individual learning needs. The quality of teaching is excellent and children are provided with an appropriate balance between activities they choose for themselves and those led by adults. This supports the development of independent learning skills very well. Assessment is informed by evidence gathered through observations of the children in their activities and staff use this information extremely well to help them plan the next steps in the children’s learning.

The setting is very effective in identifying and supporting children with additional learning needs. Children interact well with each other and enjoy warm, trusting relationships with the caring staff; as a result, they grow in confidence, they are happy and secure and ready to learn. They settle quickly because induction procedures are sensitive and staff establish very positive relationships with parents and carers. Excellent communications keep them well informed about their children’s learning and progress and excellent advice and guidance is provided on how to extend and support learning at home. The setting is led and managed extremely well and very effective team-work contributes strongly to positive outcomes for the children. Provision is monitored regularly and this supports ongoing improvements. Procedures to ensure children’s welfare are very good and meet all requirements.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The response rate to the inspection questionnaire was higher than that usually found in primary schools. The vast majority of those who responded to the questionnaire said they agree or strongly agree that they are happy with their children’s experience at the school. Parents and carers who met with a member of the inspection team commented on how eager their children are to come to school each day and on their confidence in the staff team. They remarked on the very good home-school communications, saying how they appreciate the fact that the school consults them regularly through questionnaires and meetings. Their comments indicated that parents and carers place a high value on the

school's caring ethos and that they feel they are very well informed about their children's progress and attainment. In the questionnaire responses, a small number of parents and carers expressed some disagreement over the latter point. Inspection findings endorse the views of the vast majority of respondents. A few of the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire raised issues about behaviour management. Inspectors observed behaviour in classrooms and around the school, had discussions with staff and pupils and scrutinised behavioural records. Their findings are in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gayton Primary 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 114 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 219 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	80	70	32	28	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	62	40	35	2	2	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	55	48	54	47	5	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	53	46	52	46	8	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	59	52	52	46	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	49	49	43	8	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	53	53	46	1	1	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)	59	52	44	39	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	44	56	49	6	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	40	44	39	16	14	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	41	52	46	8	7	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	66	58	36	32	8	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	66	58	44	39	4	4	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 all 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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. Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



4 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gayton Primary School, Wirral, CH60 8PZ

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning. We enjoyed our visit very much and it was lovely to meet you all.

We found that Gayton Primary is an outstanding school and that it is a very happy place for you to learn and grow together. Your education gets off to an excellent start in the Reception class and you successfully maintain the positive attitudes to learning that you establish there as you move up through the school. You are well behaved and polite young people. Your attendance is high. You work hard in your lessons, enjoy your work very much and get on well with each other and with the grown-ups in school. They look after you extremely well. They work very hard, too, to make sure that you are taught extremely well. Because of all this, you are making excellent progress in your learning and standards are very high at Gayton.

This is something we have asked the school's leaders to do, because we think it will help to make your school even better.

- Make sure that you have plenty of opportunities to develop skills across a wide range of subjects in your topic work.

You can help by continuing to do your best and by continuing to be happy learners.

With my very best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Diane Auton
Lead inspector

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