

St Giles' CofE (Aided) Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125190
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315184
Inspection date	14 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Ian Wilson

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr A Anderson
Headteacher	Miss V Aitchison
Date of previous school inspection	26 April 2004
School address	Dene Road Ashtead KT21 1EA
Telephone number	01372 272017
Fax number	01372 270639

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the achievement of children in the Foundation Stage
- what the school does that enables pupils to attain as well as they do
- how effectively the school monitors and evaluates its work and the role of subject leaders in this.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report. Evidence was gained from lessons and the school's own evaluations of its work. Discussions were held with governors, staff and pupils and a range of documentation was evaluated. Pupils' work was scrutinised in English, mathematics and science. The views of parents were gathered from questionnaires.

Description of the school

St Giles is a small infant school. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are below average and very few pupils have a home language other than English. Pupils' social and economic circumstances are better than those usually found. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school has the national Activemark award for its provision in physical education and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Giles is an outstanding school. It is a lively, happy community that enables pupils to flourish. At its core lies its strong Christian ethos in which individuals are exceptionally well looked after, achieve very high standards and develop very well socially, morally, spiritually and culturally. Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the school, as one wrote, 'St Giles is a fantastic school and we cannot sing its praises high enough. My son is extremely happy at school and is making excellent progress.' This is typical of the large number of comments by parents.

Pupils enjoy learning and love coming to school and this is reflected in their excellent attendance. They form very good relationships, look after each other and behave exceptionally well. The consistent, positive approach of all staff and focus on respect and tolerance helps pupils to develop very well socially and morally. The rich curriculum provides very well for their cultural development and opportunities to think, reflect and explore feelings together with a daily collective act of worship, ensures excellent spiritual development. Pupils develop responsibility and self-confidence and they are very well informed about staying healthy and keeping safe. Overall, they are very well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils achieve outstandingly well in the school. They enter the Reception class with levels of skills, knowledge and understanding that are above average. By the time they leave school at the end of Year 2 overall standards in reading, writing and mathematics are exceptionally high. All pupils make equally good progress including higher attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties. There are several features which contribute to this outstanding achievement. These include the pupils' strong personal development and positive attitudes towards learning, an outstanding curriculum, excellent tracking of the progress of each pupil and very well focussed support. These factors are underpinned by consistently good, and occasionally outstanding teaching throughout the school. Teachers have high expectations, and plan lessons which are enjoyable and generally have good pace. They provide good encouragement to pupils and clear guidance on how to improve. Good use is made of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to add interest to lessons. There is not a consistent approach to teaching and learning across the Foundation Stage, however. This does not adversely affect achievement but does mean that the learning experiences of reception-aged children vary between classes.

The curriculum provides pupils with a very interesting and balanced range of learning experiences. The provision for developing reading, writing and numerical skills is excellent with very good use being made of small groups to ensure that provision is 'fine-tuned' to individual need. Links between subjects are very well planned and give pupils very good opportunities to apply their learning. For example, a science investigation carried out by Year 2 pupils involved them measuring lengths of jumps and using ICT to investigate the relation between a pupil's height and how far they could jump. The curriculum is enriched by the many visitors to the school, visits undertaken by pupils and termly focussed days, such as a recent 'Victorian Day'. The use of parent and governor helpers extends the curriculum by providing very good opportunities for cooking, music making and other creative activities. There is a good range of after school clubs in which there is good participation by pupils.

The school's strengths rest on a foundation of excellent leadership and management by the headteacher, shared vision and values and excellent teamwork by all staff. She is well supported by a newly established leadership team and by the governors who have a good knowledge of the school and provide good support and challenge. The school evaluates its effectiveness very

well and plans developments carefully. The few minor issues raised at the last inspection have been dealt with but there is no sense of complacency in the school. All work hard to maintain the high standards, reach challenging targets and continue to improve. The school uses its resources carefully. A high priority is given to staffing levels and this enables pupils' learning needs to be met very well. For example, the Year 1 pupils in the mixed Reception/Year 1 class are taught on their own for some lessons, and pupils falling behind or needing extra help or challenge are taught in small groups for some of their work. The very careful monitoring of pupils' progress ensures that this extra help is very well targeted. All statutory requirements relating to the care and guidance of pupils are met fully. Links with parents and outside agencies are strong and contribute substantially to the work of the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The excellent start that children make in the Foundation Stage gives them a very firm basis for their future education. The provision shares the strengths of the rest of the school. Children are very well looked after and enabled to settle quickly into school. They are taught in two classes, one of which is a mixed age class, which also has Year 1 pupils. Expectations are high in both classes and teachers build on the good knowledge and skills that children already have to enable them to make very good progress in their personal development and in the different areas of learning. However, there are some variations in children's learning experiences between the classes, for example in terms of the opportunities for self-directed work. Children's progress across the Foundation Stage is carefully monitored and the information used well to ensure that individual needs are fully catered for.

What the school should do to improve further

The school has no major weaknesses and has clear plans for a number of things it wishes to improve. The inspector agrees that these form a very good basis for future development. In addition:

- the school should ensure a consistent approach to teaching across the Foundation Stage so that children's learning experiences do not vary between classes.

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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and 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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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

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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

23 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Giles' CofE (Aided) Infant School, Ashted, KT21 1EA

You may remember that I recently came to visit your school. Thank you for making me feel so welcome. You were all very polite, confident and told me what you thought very clearly. I really enjoyed meeting you, your teachers and other people who work in the school, and am writing to let you know what I found out.

I think that you go to an excellent school, which is led very well by your headteacher. Both she and all staff are very committed to helping you achieve well. I think that you have good teachers and that the school organises lessons and all the other learning activities very effectively so that they are interesting and meet your needs very well. The school frequently checks on how well you are doing and provides very good additional help when you need it. As a result, you all make excellent progress throughout school. Both you and your parents said how much you enjoyed school and get along with each other. You feel safe, cared for and work hard. I was particularly impressed with the way your school helps you to develop good personal skills, such as self-confidence, being responsible and knowing how to stay safe and healthy.

I have made just one suggestion for improvement and that is for the school to make sure that children in the two reception classes get the same sort of work to do.

I am sure that your school will carry on getting better and better and that you will help by keeping up the excellent behaviour and continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Ian Wilson

Lead Inspector