

Gilmour Junior School

Whitehedge Road, Garston, Liverpool, Merseyside L19 1RD

Inspection dates

31 October – 1 November 2017

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders provide effective leadership. A shared drive and vision with staff ensures that effective action is now being taken to improve pupils' progress.
- Leaders have taken time to bring about the right assessment system, which has delayed accurate monitoring of pupils' progress. The new system now in place is starting to contribute to improvements.
- The progress made by pupils has not been good, especially for the disadvantaged and pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. However, improved assessment is enabling pupils to make better progress.
- In 2017, test results showed that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standards in English and mathematics exceeded national expectations.
- The governing body is well informed of the school's work and provides good levels of support and challenge. A seamless transition between the outgoing chair of governors and the new chair has ensured that there is continuity.
- Effective teaching helps pupils to apply problem-solving and reasoning skills. Pupils have confidence to use their knowledge in a range of mathematical situations.
- Pupils' writing is improving because of a whole-school approach to teaching reading and spelling.
- Teaching assistants plan alongside teachers. They make an informed contribution to pupils' achievement.
- Pupils feel safe and happy at school. They respect each other and are keen to do well. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils are articulate, polite and proud of their school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and appreciation of British values are promoted effectively. Leaders provide pupils with a broad, balanced curriculum.
- The scrutiny of pupils' books shows that pupils have a number of opportunities to develop their English and mathematical skills in a wide range of subjects.
- Subject leaders do not use the new assessment systems sufficiently well to inform pupils' progress in their subjects.
- Persistent absenteeism and lateness remain a problem in the school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed the current assessment system, to ensure that assessment information is used with greater precision to build on the emerging improvements in pupils' progress by:
 - making sure that subject leaders use assessment information effectively to inform future planning
 - ensuring that assessment information for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and pupils who are disadvantaged is used to continue to reduce the differences between their progress and that of others nationally
 - continuing to develop the use of assessment information to identify when pupils are falling behind in their learning, so that they can receive appropriate support quickly.
- Reduce the lateness and absence of pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have high expectations and a clear vision for improvement, which pupils, staff, parents and governors understand and support. As a result, expectations of what the pupils can achieve are now clearer across the school and leading to sustainable improvement in their outcomes.
- Improved data ensures that the leaders' self-evaluation is now more accurate. They use this to draft and implement rigorous plans to secure improvement. As a result, they are addressing key areas of underperformance, such as reading and mathematics.
- The outgoing chair of governors forged a strong tier of leadership, which was well informed, especially in checking teaching and holding others to account. The same can be said of the new chair, after a seamless transition into her new post.
- Leaders implement effective accountability systems, including the management of staff performance and training. These are a well-established part of the school's approach to improving teaching and learning. As a result, teachers and teaching assistants are well supported and challenged to improve their practice.
- Subject leaders show a willingness to learn and grow. Some are pursuing national accreditation and national awards in their subject areas. Subject knowledge is particularly good in history, music, art and science. The new assessment systems are starting to enable them to track progress in their subject areas more effectively.
- The pupil premium grant for disadvantaged pupils is now used well. Recent improved assessment means that disadvantaged pupils are identified and funds used to give additional support. These pupils are starting to make more rapid progress now that there are more frequent checks on the impact of interventions.
- Primary physical education and sport funding has been used successfully to widen the range of sports on offer. The sports coach helps pupils to develop their skills on the playground and in the wider community. Leaders have invested in improving the range of equipment on offer, so opportunities abound.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is interwoven throughout the curriculum and included in daily assemblies and other subject areas. Pupils have a good knowledge of, and respect for, different religions and cultures.
- Parents are widely supportive of the school and recognise the improvements being made over time, such as better communication. One parent said: 'They are not just educating children, they are enriching their lives on so many personal levels too.'
- The local authority has provided effective challenge and support to the school since the previous inspection.
- Leaders are not taking effective enough action to ensure that pupils arrive on time. Persistent absence remains a problem for some pupils.
- Leaders are starting to check the effectiveness of targeted, small-group

interventions more effectively. As a result, the progress of pupils is improving and gaps are narrowing.

- The unavoidable long-term absence of the mathematics and English leaders stalled the progress in these subjects in 2016. Since their return, systematic improvements have been made to the calculation policy, problem-solving and reasoning. Daily spelling sessions, alongside purposeful guided reading sessions, are also improving pupils' progress. Effective leadership has helped sustained stability during a difficult time.
- Clear, focused leadership has led to the recent improvements in pupils' progress. Leaders provide essential support and challenge. This is now having a positive impact on teaching and learning.

Governance of the school

- Governors have an accurate view of the strengths of the school and understand where it can improve. They provide good levels of support and challenge to school leaders. Governors have a clear view about the quality of teaching and the performance of the school, and are committed to ensuring that pupils' progress continues to improve.
- Governors bring to their roles a wide set of qualities, such as professional skills and a good knowledge of the local community.
- Governors ensure that their training is up to date and take their responsibility for safeguarding seriously.
- The seamless transition between the outgoing and incoming chairs of governors has ensured that there continues to be strong challenge and support.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The leaders have ensured that all staff and governors have read and acted on the latest guidance on keeping children safe in education. The school works successfully with its key partners to ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for.
- The social and emotional welfare of all the children is paramount. There is a very strong safeguarding culture, which is clearly evidenced by the level of care that staff demonstrate towards each and every child. There is mutual trust between pupils and the adults who look after them.
- Internet safety is understood well by pupils of all ages. Leaders communicate well with parents through newsletters, the website and school activities. Safeguarding policies are all up to date, with relevant links on the website.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching and learning is good across the school, with some particularly strong teaching in Year 4. Less experienced teachers receive appropriate coaching and support.

- Attitudes to learning are good, particularly when activities are pitched at the appropriate level. School logs show that this has had a positive impact on behaviour in the classroom.
- Classrooms are bright, vibrant and purposeful. Pupils' work is showcased well, particularly some very creative and imaginative artwork that spills over into pupils' learning. Music, history and French are also strengths of the school.
- Teachers are creative in their efforts to ensure that activities engage the pupils in their learning. In science, pupils worked under the table with mirrors and torches, as part of their work on testing out reflective light. Pupils enjoy learning. They are keen to share what they are learning and spontaneously burst into a French song in a pupil meeting, with very little encouragement.
- Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are starting to make greater progress.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning effectively to challenge the way that pupils think. This keeps them interested and on task.
- The curriculum has been designed to appeal to the pupils. Texts of different genres are chosen to appeal to pupils' interests. One pupil was fascinated by the Second World War topic in English and had carried out further research in her own time.
- The teaching of basic skills of grammar and punctuation is good, reflecting the success of the English leader's drive to improve this aspect of writing.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Additional training to support the implementation of a new calculations policy has given teachers the skills to develop the pupils' mathematical skills. Pupils understand what they need to do next to improve.
- The teaching of reading is good. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the improved range of reading materials available to them in the classroom and in the library. Pupils enjoy the new spelling sessions and learn well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are becoming confident learners. They are well equipped for their lessons and settle quickly to their work. One lesson observed by inspectors was 'tidied away' in precisely three minutes, because of a concerted team effort.
- There is a commitment throughout the staff to support the social and emotional development of pupils, so that they become successful learners of the future. They know their pupils well.
- Pupils know how to make the right choices and understand whom to turn to if they have a problem. Pupils can report any concerns online, using an appropriate reporting system. They are confident that these will be dealt with effectively.

- Pupils are given opportunities to take the lead as members of the school council. They are proud of their roles and responsibilities and represent the views of other pupils well.
- Parents enthuse about the school and appreciate the improvements in communication. One parent said: 'This is an excellent school with dedicated staff.' Another commented: 'My child has additional needs and the school has been very inclusive and supportive of his full participation in the curriculum and extra-curricular activities. He feels safe and happy at school.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The behaviour when pupils enter class and begin their lessons is calm, orderly and purposeful. The systems and processes for managing transition points between lessons and breaktimes work well.
- Most pupils display positive attitudes to learning. Only occasionally are pupils' attitudes less than good, when they are not given work that keeps them concentrating.
- School lunchtimes and breaktimes are well supervised. There are many activities for pupils to engage in and develop their physical skills and healthy lifestyles. Behaviour on the playground is good.
- Leaders are starting to track and analyse patterns of behaviour for a small minority of pupils. They are linking this with a detailed analysis of attendance.
- Attendance is broadly in line with national expectations. Although reducing, persistent absenteeism for a small number of pupils remains a problem.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- The progress of pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, in 2016 and 2017, was significantly below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. In some year groups, the progress gap is narrowing between disadvantaged pupils, those who have SEN and/or disabilities and their peers. This is partly because of improved analysis of the progress made by pupils in their small-group work.
- Pivotal to improvements has been the introduction of a new assessment system. The delay in bringing this about hampered accuracy in monitoring pupils' progress. This led to some underperformance but changes are now having an impact on raising pupils' progress. Assessment information is now accurate and leaders are beginning to track the progress of all groups of learners more accurately.
- The progress of pupils in Year 6 is not as good as it should, be particularly in reading and mathematics. Leaders have, however, taken effective action to ensure that pupils can make more rapid progress.
- Pupils who are disadvantaged and those who have SEN and/or disabilities are making improved progress. For the past two years, the progress that these pupils made from their starting points was well below the national average.

- Attainment at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders are not complacent and have put in place clear strategies to rectify weaker aspects of pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling. The attainment and achievement of boys in mathematics has improved since the consistent implementation of the new calculations policy and strong emphasis on problem-solving and reasoning.
- The most able pupils progress in line with expectations in the national tests across the full range of subjects.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils learn across a range of subjects. Their learning and personal development are supported by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils are given opportunities to achieve well in subjects such as music, French, history, art and physical education. Writing and mathematics activities are expertly interwoven into the topic work.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 104543 |
| Local authority | Liverpool |
| Inspection number | 10037761 |

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

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| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 234 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | K Burnell |
| Headteacher | C McDonald |
| Telephone number | 0151 427 4682 |
| Website | www.gilmourjuniors.com |
| Email address | head@gilmourjuniors.com |
| Date of previous inspection | 25–26 June 2013 |

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- There has been a change of headteacher since the previous inspection.
- The school has a lower than average proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum standards expected nationally for pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. They observed teaching in lessons. These included joint observation with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at examples of pupils' work and talked to them about their learning.
- Inspectors talked to parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors took account of free-text responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. There were 30 positive responses and no negative responses. There were no responses to the staff or pupil online questionnaires.
- Meetings were held with a group of pupils, the outgoing and incoming chairs of governors, two representatives of the local authority, and school leaders.
- Inspectors also listened to a number of pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 read.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including: the school's own information on pupils' current progress; anonymised evidence of performance management and professional development; the school development plan and school self-evaluation documents; planning or work in different subjects; leaders' monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding of pupils.

Inspection team

Maggie Parker, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Tina Cleugh

Ofsted Inspector

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