

# Gillingstool Primary School

Gillingstool, Thornbury, Bristol BS35 2EG

## Inspection dates

11–12 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Governors have not had the information they need to enable them to challenge leaders with sufficient rigour.
- Leaders' actions to halt the decline in standards are too recent to have had any impact.
- The quality of teaching and learning is too variable. The revised strategies implemented by leaders have not had time to show impact on classroom practice.
- Teachers do not routinely plan learning which is matched to pupils' starting points. Therefore, the most able pupils are not consistently challenged and those who require additional help are not supported to catch up.
- Teachers do not consistently use assessment to highlight misconceptions so that pupils are able to address these and build on what they already know, including in the accuracy of spelling and punctuation.
- Pupils do not make good enough progress by the end of Year 6. The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics is below the national average.
- Until 2018, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development in the early years had been consistently below the national average.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities do not make sufficient progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors' evaluation of the use of additional funding provided for disadvantaged pupils and the development of sport is not precise enough.
- The curriculum has not enabled pupils to develop their knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects.
- Absence and persistent absence rates are above the national averages.

### The school has the following strengths

- The interim leadership team of the school is committed to providing the stability and direction required after a period of change.
- Staff and adults in the early years have created an environment that is safe and nurturing. Children respond positively to adults and interact well with each other.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - governors hold leaders more stringently to account for outcomes and standards
  - new leaders further develop their skills and expertise so that they support the drive for improvement
  - the curriculum is embedded so that all pupils can achieve well and have a greater understanding across a range of subjects
  - improvements being made in the early years continue to ensure that children make consistently strong progress
  - governors fully evaluate the impact of additional funding so that disadvantaged pupils make more rapid progress.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
  - using assessment information to match learning precisely to the needs of pupils, challenging the most able and supporting all pupils – particularly disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities – to reach their potential
  - supporting pupils to improve the accuracy of their spelling and punctuation so that they are able to demonstrate these skills independently.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by continuing to implement strategies and robustly challenge those who do not attend school regularly.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how well this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- The newly appointed interim leadership team has the determination and drive to make the improvements required, prior to the appointment of a permanent headteacher. The executive headteacher has provided the energy, support and capacity to accelerate improvements so that standards rise quickly. However, much of this work is recent and therefore the impact is yet to be realised in improving outcomes.
- Leaders are now more outward-looking and have responded positively to the support provided. The leadership team has been proactive in addressing the areas of the school's work that require attention. Leaders have made a notable difference to the establishment of a positive climate.
- Senior leaders' self-evaluation is now more precise and has accurately identified the actions that will support pupils to make more rapid progress. Leaders are honest in their reflections and their understanding of the work still required.
- Leaders have recently started to track pupils' progress at regular points in the year. This gives them an accurate understanding of the gaps that pupils have in skills and knowledge. Teachers confirm the accuracy of their assessments with other schools so that there is confidence in the rigour of this information. However, leaders have not yet fully embedded the use of this information in classroom practice. This means that teachers do not plan precisely enough to challenge and support pupils effectively. This slows the progress pupils make.
- Senior leaders have been decisive in tackling practice which does not meet expectations. Staff are clear on what is expected and have responded positively to the changes made. Leaders have ensured that training is well planned and aligned to priorities, meaning that staff are equipped to remedy previous underperformance. New teachers receive effective support and professional guidance to ensure a firm foundation as they start their careers.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities do not make the progress they should. Leaders have identified the barriers to learning for these groups of pupils and now track their progress regularly, implementing strategies and reviewing the impact of actions taken. Leaders have ensured that these actions are closely aligned to academic outcomes, as well as the social and emotional support required.
- The curriculum has been refined to ensure that pupils improve their understanding across a wider range of subjects. This supports pupils to make links in their learning and practise their reading and writing skills in a variety of contexts. Leaders make the curriculum exciting and engaging. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were enthusiastically involved in their 'Wow' day, building suspension bridges out of marshmallows and spaghetti in preparation for the topic this term. Throughout this, they were able to talk through their design processes and explain the reasons for their decisions.
- Newly appointed subject leaders are developing their skills and expertise to lead improvement. They have benefited from the support provided by the local authority

and from their work with other schools. They are now better equipped to support senior leaders in raising standards.

- Leaders show an ambition for pupils and what they can achieve. They are committed to providing activities that broaden pupils' horizons and improve their life chances. They ensure that all pupils have access to the clubs and visits that are organised throughout the year.
- Leaders have used the sport premium effectively to provide specialist coaches to improve pupils' health and fitness. They encourage pupils to make healthy choices and, as a result, the number of pupils who participate in clubs and activities has increased.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors are committed to the success of the school. However, they have not been persistent enough in ensuring that they have the right information to accurately understand the quality of education the school provides. In the past, they have been too reliant on what they are told by senior leaders, without having first-hand knowledge of whether leaders are taking effective action. They acknowledge this and are determined to improve the effectiveness of their work.
- The recent changes to the leadership of the school have meant that governors receive timely and transparent information. Governors are becoming better able to interpret this and ask pertinent questions to probe and challenge senior leaders. Recent visits have enabled them to develop their expertise in understanding the work of the school more fully. However, at present, they have not developed a systematic approach to this, which means that the impact of their role is limited.
- Governors' analysis of the use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and for sport is not sharp enough. Leaders now provide information that identifies barriers to learning and tracks actions and expenditure. However, more precision is required by governors to evaluate the impact of strategies to inform future spending decisions.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The culture of safeguarding is strong. The head of school has made several changes to strengthen safeguarding practices. All staff know how to apply child protection procedures and relevant information is displayed for pupils and staff around the school. Training is up to date and includes protecting pupils from radicalism and exploitation. All statutory checks are made to ensure that staff are safe to work with children.
- Leaders have appointed staff who provide early help for vulnerable pupils and their families. They are proactive in working with external partners to support pupils who are at risk. Referrals are timely and clearly outline a chronology of action and outcomes.
- Pupils can clearly explain how to recognise risk and know how to stay healthy and safe, particularly when online. Parents and carers say that their children feel safe in school. This is echoed by pupils, who say they are confident about talking to their teachers and trust them to take action when required.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning varies too much across the school. The teaching of current pupils has improved recently as the newly implemented approaches are becoming evident. However, teachers' planning does not always take into account pupils' starting points. This means that higher-ability pupils are not encouraged to extend their thinking and demonstrate a higher level of understanding.
- Teachers' support for those who have fallen behind, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, is not developed well enough to rectify gaps in their understanding. They are now making progress but they are not catching up quickly enough to prepare them for the next stages of their education.
- Teachers do not routinely use assessment information to help pupils understand what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. This means that misconceptions are not always identified quickly and precisely enough. Where this is the case, pupils continue to make the same mistakes and this limits the progress they are able to make.
- Leaders are establishing a culture of reading through the use of 'Reading Rangers', who are additional adults that listen to pupils read. This provides the opportunity for pupils to read regularly to improve fluency and accuracy. A more structured approach to the teaching of phonics is developing and training is in place to support this. However, the approach to reading across the school is not coherent and some pupils are unsure of the level of material that is appropriate for them to read. Books are not always well matched to pupils' level of ability and, consequently, they read texts that do not provide suitable challenge.
- Pupils write for a variety of audiences and purpose and show that they can sustain their responses. Higher-ability pupils are able to write in an engaging way and use adventurous vocabulary, independently using class resources to help them do so. They challenge themselves to develop their own compositions and extend their creativity. Teaching assistants skilfully support the development of independent writing for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. However, inaccurate spelling, punctuation and grammar hamper some pupils' ability to express themselves effectively.
- Leaders have taken action to provide greater structure to the teaching of mathematics and this has meant that pupils' fluency and confidence have started to improve. The most able pupils are provided with tasks that require them to use their skills to solve problems, which helps them to extend their thinking. However, because pupils often do not finish their work, they do not always tackle the more complex reasoning and problem-solving tasks. Teachers do not always insist that work is set out neatly so that pupils can follow their own methodology.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Requires improvement

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- The curriculum has not been planned sufficiently to ensure that pupils are well prepared to develop their personal and social skills. This means that pupils have had a

limited understanding of issues relevant to them and to life in modern Britain. The new curriculum has begun to address this issue and there is now a more coherent approach which is age-appropriate. Pupils can talk confidently about concepts such as tolerance, respect and democracy. They are encouraged to consider topical issues and discuss these regularly.

- Leaders have ensured that the curriculum now provides more meaningful activities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral and cultural understanding. Pupils explore different cultures and religions and celebrate the languages of their classmates who speak English as an additional language. Staff organise visits and visitors so that pupils take part in a variety of cultural experiences.
- The large majority of pupils are positive about their experience of school. They understand expectations and respond well to these. They say that instances of bullying are rare and are dealt with quickly by staff when these do occur. Pupils told inspectors that they know where they could find support if they needed it. Parents are also positive about the work of the school in supporting their children's well-being. One parent commented that the school is a 'friendly, caring and happy place which sets the right tone for successful learning' and this is a view shared by many of the parents who responded.
- Pupils are well supervised in social time and interact positively with each other. Staff are vigilant about making sure that the site is secure.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- The rates of absence, persistent absence and lateness are too high. Leaders have recently implemented more rigorous systems to ensure that pupils attend regularly. These actions have had an impact in the short term but it is too early to say whether this will be sustained over a longer period of time. However, leaders are aware of those pupils who are vulnerable and strategies are in place to support them. A member of staff has been employed to work with families to promote the importance of good attendance and these expectations are regularly reinforced through parent newsletters.
- Leaders have implemented a new behaviour strategy and this has been successful in creating an environment where pupils can learn effectively. The school has been successful in addressing challenging behaviour, which has been a feature in the past. The number of behavioural incidents is reducing and, when these do occur, leaders involve parents and ensure that suitable strategies are in place to support pupils to adhere to expectations.
- The large majority of pupils conduct themselves well, both in lessons and around the school. They are confident, curious and willing to talk.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- The proportion of pupils achieving the combined expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 has improved but is still below the national average. A smaller proportion of pupils than nationally achieved the higher standard.

- The proportion of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, who reach the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 has increased over the last three years and has been above the national average. The proportion of pupils who go on to demonstrate a higher level of understanding has also improved and is now in line with national figures. No disadvantaged pupils reached this benchmark in 2016 and 2017 but this has improved for the recent cohort, where figures are now in line with the figures typically seen nationally.
- Pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils and the most able, do not make strong enough progress by the end of Year 6. Writing has been particularly weak, being in the lowest 5% of schools nationally at points over the last three years. There have been improvements but the most recent cohort shows that these improvements are not secure due to the inconsistencies that still remain in the quality of teaching. This is also the case for the progress that pupils make in reading and mathematics.
- Provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has not met the requirements of the code of practice in the past. This has meant that pupils have not made sufficient progress from their starting points in all key stages. The appointment of a new special educational needs coordinator from April 2018 has begun to resolve these issues and there is now a more robust monitoring of provision. This has resulted in improved progress for current groups of pupils but it is too early to see the impact of this over the longer term.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve the standard in the phonics screening check had been steadily rising over previous years, meaning that it has been above national figures. However, this figure has dropped markedly in 2018. Provision is in place to ensure that the teaching of phonics is more carefully targeted to the needs of pupils to support them to achieve this standard by the end of Year 2.

### Early years provision

### Requires improvement

- Most children come to school with skills that are below those typical for their age. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has risen in 2018, meaning that it is now in line with figures seen nationally. However, outcomes prior to this have been below the national average for children moving into Year 1, including for reading, writing and mathematics. Boys and disadvantaged pupils do less well than their classmates, meaning that they are not fully prepared for Year 1. Too few of the most able children, particularly those who are disadvantaged, demonstrate deeper knowledge and understanding.
- Leaders are passionate about their work and know children and families well. However, the strategic overview of the provision lacks precision, particularly in terms of the groups of children who need to make accelerated progress. Planning is in place to identify priorities but the impact of actions is not sharply evaluated to make sure that those who fall behind can catch up.
- Leaders ensure that there is a suitable blend of curriculum activities to support pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding across all areas of learning. Children move freely between activities in an environment which is stimulating and language- and number-rich. Outside areas are well equipped to develop physical skills and there are opportunities for mark-making and for children to rehearse number sequencing and

counting. Adults engage positively with children during their learning. They provide a good level of language modelling, talking through the activities that children have completed. Children are encouraged and able to talk enthusiastically about what they are doing.

- In more structured tasks, children can demonstrate their sorting and number recognition skills. Children respond well to these tasks because adults regularly praise and encourage them. The most able children demonstrate that they can recognise and sequence two-digit numbers but they do not always move on quickly enough to more complex problems which are better matched to their ability.
- Teachers use phonics understanding to underpin the teaching of reading and writing. Children use this knowledge to read and write words appropriate to their level of ability. Writing books illustrate that teachers have a secure awareness of the developmental needs of the children as they become emergent writers. The most able children show they are to write in simple sentences and then use conjunctions and punctuation accurately to extend these. They use their knowledge to write phonetically plausible attempts at unknown words. Those children that require extra support are given the opportunity to rehearse letter formation before moving on to writing simple sentences.
- Staff are developing more effective communication with home and with pre-school settings. This means that teachers have an accurate understanding of children's ability and welfare needs when they arrive in Reception. Engagement with parents is also improving, which is having a positive effect on the way in which children settle quickly into the routines established. Children are encouraged to 'stay and play' in the summer term, which supports them to make the transition to Reception. 'Magic moments' are shared with parents, and learning journeys clearly show what pupils are able to do.
- Safeguarding is effective and welfare requirements are met, including with regard to paediatric first-aid training.



## School details

Unique reference number	109126
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10047846

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	165
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Catherine Davis
Executive headteacher	Paul Smith
Head of school	Thomas Mullins
Telephone number	01454 866 527
Website	<a href="http://www.gillingstool.org.uk">www.gillingstool.org.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:office@gillingstool.org.uk">office@gillingstool.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	January 2015

## Information about this school

- Gillingstool Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is currently overseen by an executive headteacher, appointed in April 2018. A head of school has been in post since November 2017.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is also higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning across a range of subjects and age groups and scrutinised pupils' written work. Some of the observations were conducted jointly with members of the leadership team.
- Meetings were held with members of the leadership team and representatives from the governing body. In addition, inspectors met with curriculum leaders. An inspector met with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors met with pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities, both formally and informally, to discuss their views about their experience of school.
- Inspectors looked at the school's documentation, including the evaluation of the school's effectiveness and priorities for future improvement. Inspectors reviewed progress, behaviour and attendance information relating to current pupils, and governors' records. An inspector considered a letter received by a member of the governing body.
- School policies relating to safeguarding, pupils' behaviour, the use of additional funding, including the pupil premium and the sport premium, and the curriculum were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors listened to a selection of pupils read.
- Inspectors considered 26 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 10 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

## Inspection team

Sarah McGinnis, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Emma Jelley

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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