

# PROTECT-INSPECTION

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9 June 2011

Mr A Hargrave  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Hargrave

## **Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Gorse Hill Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 8 June 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to all the staff and pupils to whom I spoke and the local authority officer with whom I met.

At the time of the previous inspection, two members of the teaching staff were on long-term sickness leave. Currently, all substantive teaching staff are in post.

As a result of the inspection on 17 March 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter. Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made satisfactory progress in tackling the areas for improvement identified in the inspection but inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' results in the Key Stage 2 tests declined in 2010 continuing a general trend of weakening performance at the end of Key Stage 2 over recent years. The proportion of pupils gaining the expected level, Level 4, in English or mathematics was around the target set by central government. Significantly fewer pupils gained the expected level in both English and mathematics than the national average. Pupils in receipt of free school meals attained less well overall than their classmates and peers nationally.

The results from the summer 2010 assessments at Key Stage 1 for seven year olds maintained the trend of pupils attaining broadly average results in reading but lower results in writing and mathematics. Boys and pupils in receipt of free school meals performed less well than their classmates.

The evidence from the work in pupils' books and from lessons shows that progress made by pupils is not consistent over time. As a result of the additional support, resources and

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challenge provided by the local authority since the previous inspection, much work has been done to improve the school's systems to track pupils' progress. This work, led by a consultant from the local authority has been implemented by middle managers at Gorse Hill, thus extending the management capacity of other staff. Additionally, staff are beginning to play a more prominent role in the management of the curriculum.

Evidence from lesson observations, however, shows that, in too many cases, pupils are provided with work that does not match their need or ability. For example, the previous inspection noted the good arrangements in place to teach letter sounds to pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. On this visit, these good arrangements were again noted and there was clear evidence of even the youngest children developing good letter sounds skills. However, this is not translated into higher teacher expectations of pupils' writing or reading. Writing activities in Key Stage 1, especially in Year 1, are dominated by low-level work, often on worksheets, which does not allow pupils to develop the stamina and skill to write at length. There is a shortage of early reading books for pupils to use, especially for the children in Reception classes. Elsewhere throughout the school, the inspector found examples where the match of reading and/or library books to pupils' ability and interest was poor.

The local authority has provided consultant support to the school to develop the communication, language and literacy provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This support is bearing fruit. The most recent data on the outcomes achieved by the children at the end of Reception Year in 2010 showed an improvement in this aspect.

Parts of the environment for the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 are very poor. The Nursery and Reception areas especially are not clean enough and present a welfare risk to the young children there. Walls, carpets, floors, cupboards, furniture, toys and equipment are all in need of a deep clean and refurbishment or replacement. The areas are cramped and cluttered. The outside area has been extended and is now well stocked with a good range of large and small equipment for the children to use.

This inspection has raised serious concerns about the senior leadership and management of the school. The drive for improvement in academic standards is being led by the local authority. These concerns will be considered by the appropriate Regional Director, Inspection Delivery, who will decide when the school will next be inspected.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Angela Westington  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**



**Annex**

**The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 17 March 2010**

- Improve children's development in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - accelerating progress in personal, communication and language skills
  - developing the use of the outdoor area for learning in the Reception classes.
- Improve progress in Key Stage 1 by:
  - developing the curriculum in Year 1 to ensure that all pupils have the skills they need before accessing the Key Stage 1 programmes of study
  - ensuring that the system for assessing progress is fully implemented and that information is consistently used to plan work at the right level of challenge.
- Develop a more collaborative and flexible approach to curriculum management so that improvement programmes are not over-dependent on one leader.