

# Gorse Hall Primary and Nursery School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106188
<b>Local Authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	355901
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sarah Drake

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	450
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Gary Sculthorp
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Amanda Stringer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	9 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Forester Drive Stalybridge Cheshire SK15 2DP
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 338 4262
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 23 lessons and parts of lessons taught by 19 teachers and teaching assistants. The inspectors also held meetings with members of school staff, three governors, a small number of parents and three groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation relating to pupils' progress and school management. The inspectors also took into account the responses to the inspection questionnaires returned by 84 parents and carers, 30 staff and 199 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2, with a particular focus on higher-ability pupils and those who are identified as vulnerable.
- The success with which teachers use information about pupils' attainment and progress when planning and delivering lessons.
- The effectiveness of leaders and managers at all levels in analysing what needs to be done and driving forward improvement.

## Information about the school

Gorse Hall is twice the size of an average primary school and is situated in the centre of Stalybridge. Its pupils come from a wide catchment area with a stable population. The large majority of pupils are White British with the others belonging to a range of minority ethnic groups. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportions of pupils that are known to be eligible for free school meals or that have special educational needs and/or disabilities are below average. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Nursery class that children attend part time and two Reception classes. A new headteacher joined the school in April 2010; the acting deputy headteacher took up her post at the start of the current term.

The school holds the local authority's Healthy School status and has been awarded the Eco School Green Flag. It has achieved the Financial Management in School standard.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory school which is experiencing a period of significant change. It is a tribute to the dynamism, analytical and interpersonal skills of the new headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, that pupils, parents and carers, staff and governors all consider that the changes already made are having a positive effect. At this stage of the school year, it is too early for there to have been a measurable impact on the progress that pupils make, which is satisfactory. Pupils' attainment is broadly average but their skills in writing and mathematics are less strong than those in reading.

Children enjoy a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage where staff are skilled at building on individuals' interests so that they feel a sense of thrill in their own achievements. Good arrangements help pupils to settle smoothly into school or their new classes. The overall quality of care, guidance and support is good. A very large majority of pupils state that they enjoy school. They consider that it is a friendly place and they have confidence to go to staff with their concerns. Pupils and staff agree that, in response to the new behaviour system, incidents of low-level disruption have decreased. Almost all the behaviour in lessons is good or better. However, in less structured situations, a significant minority of pupils demonstrate insufficient self-discipline or concern for others. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay healthy. There is good participation in extra-curricular sporting activities and pupils are three times local cross-country champions.

The quality of teaching is inconsistent across the school and satisfactory overall, leading to pupils' satisfactory achievement. Due to much hard work on behalf of the leaders and managers, all teachers now have access to information about pupils' attainment levels and progress. They do not always use this to best effect in order to provide those of different abilities with the right amount of challenge in their work.

Good quality leadership and management are embedding ambition and driving forward change so that the outcomes for pupils are improving. The school has evaluated accurately its strengths and areas for improvement and has suitably prioritised its action plans. There is a strong sense of optimism and teamwork among members of staff and the governing body. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

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

- Raise levels of attainment, particularly in writing and mathematics, by:
  - enabling more pupils to reach the higher levels in both subjects
  - improving boys' performance in writing

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- making better use of the information held about individuals' skills to ensure that they make good progress.
- Establish teaching of consistently good or better quality through the school, by:
  - ensuring that all teachers make clear to pupils of all abilities what they expect them to achieve in their work
  - improving the way that teachers adapt lessons in the light of pupils' successes or misunderstandings
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to become enthused by their work and to develop their independent learning skills.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to acquire greater self-discipline and respect for others.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

When the teaching is lively, with clearly explained and exciting activities, for example, a science investigation for Year 5 after a visit to a water treatment works, pupils set to work with a will, creating a busy, purposeful atmosphere in the classroom. In most lessons pupils settle well and show interest in the tasks but they do not always listen sufficiently carefully to instructions and they take time to organise themselves and get down to individual work. A minority of pupils find it hard to work effectively in groups or to sustain their concentration.

Historically, most children's skills on entry to the school have been somewhat below those expected for their age and they have joined Year 1 with broadly average levels of attainment. Test results at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have fluctuated over the years but are currently broadly in line with those expected for pupils' age. However, too few pupils reach the higher levels, particularly in writing and mathematics. Boys' attainment in writing at both the expected and higher levels is significantly below that of girls. The progress and enjoyment of all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are satisfactory.

Behaviour is improving but the weakness in some pupils' expectations of their own effort and self-discipline extends beyond the classroom leading, on occasion, to fallings out in the playground and other general areas. However, a very large majority of pupils say that they do feel safe in school. They find it 'fun' and are appreciative of recent changes such as the new library space and, 'better assemblies that make us think'. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities such as school or eco councillors, playground leaders and monitors. Some Year 6 pupils have initiated and begun to run a popular drama club. Pupils' understanding of the wider community, particularly of those whose culture is different from their own, is at an early stage of development.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

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

## How effective is the provision?

There is teaching of good quality and better within the school but this is not yet consistent enough. Strengths include good behaviour management, effective use of interactive whiteboards, some open questioning that encourages pupils to think about their learning, and planning that identifies different work for those of different ability. However, in practice, tasks do not always provide the right level of challenge for different groups, especially for the higher-attaining pupils. Not all teachers explain to pupils, with enough precision, their expectations of what they should include in their work or how quickly they should complete it. Some of the teaching inspires pupils to take charge of their learning because they are so interested in what they are doing. More frequently, lessons are tightly controlled, leaving less room for enthusiasm and independent learning. Teachers do not always share examples of high quality work to clarify and encourage others or draw pupils' attention to any misunderstandings to help them use their time to best effect. Teaching assistants provide useful help to small groups but are not always fully involved in whole-class sessions. Marking sometimes provides pupils with helpful pointers to improve their work but this good practice is not yet consistent.

The curriculum covers all the required areas and has been adapted well over the past two years. It makes imaginative links between subjects and this makes learning more purposeful and interesting. Pupils enjoy the visits and visitors that bring their learning to life and also the good range of extra-curricular activities. These have recently been

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improved in response to requests from parents and carers. The curriculum provides a sound base for pupils' learning: it is not yet having a better than satisfactory influence on their academic and personal development.

Good quality care, guidance and support have a significant impact on the well-being and achievement of potentially vulnerable pupils. Pupils speak positively about the new 'always badge' system which recognises good behaviour. Procedures to improve attendance are rigorous and have, for instance, led to a reduction in the number of persistent absentees. Links with outside agencies ensure suitable support for those in need and their families. The two days that pupils spent in their new classes at the end of the summer term produced some lively displays and meant that they settled well at the start of the new academic year.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

All those associated with the school are unanimous in praise of the 'breath of fresh air' brought by the new headteacher who 'homes in on people's strengths'. A strong sense of unity and direction pervades the school. Information about pupils' progress is now readily accessible to those who need to know and forms the basis of all decision making. Rigorous analysis combined with an open approach and understanding of staff's needs means that all are now clear about their roles and willingly taking on responsibilities. Training and time are available to ensure that staff carry out their new roles effectively. For example, the mathematics leaders have identified strengths and weaker areas in their subject, drawn up an action plan and created a policy to ensure that calculation skills are developed in a consistent manner through the school. Senior leaders have a very accurate view of strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, and strategies in place to eradicate the weaknesses. Governors are becoming well organised and informed, which enables them to hold the school more closely to account for pupils' progress. Satisfactory arrangements ensure pupils are safeguarded from harm, including careful recruitment procedures and vetting of all volunteers. Parents and carers state that they feel increasingly welcome in school. They are developing some imaginative fund-raising activities that also involve the pupils. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. It is reaching out into the local community, and has some useful partnerships there that enhance the provision for pupils, but it is at an early stage of extending links to a wider area. Leaders' increasingly careful analysis of the progress of different groups is leading to adapted provision to meet their needs. Behaviour has improved and suitable systems are in place to ensure equality of opportunity. The rigour and energy of leaders

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and managers are providing clarity and a strong framework to help move the school forward.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

On entry to both Nursery and Reception, children's prior experiences and skills development vary but, overall, they are broadly as expected for their age. Visits by staff to childcare settings and children's visits to the school during the summer, combined with the gradual start at the beginning of the year mean that, even early in the term, children are well settled, confident and curious. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage; their progress in linking letters and sounds is particularly strong. For the past two years the majority have joined Year 1 with skills at or above those expected for their age in all areas of learning. Good leadership and management ensure that adults use their observations of children to record their progress and identify the next steps they need to take. All staff are skilled at using humour and intervening at just the right moment to help children refocus their attention or, through open questions, to encourage further thought and investigation. Whether discussing with awe the attributes of a giant snail, realising for the first time that they can read a simple story or giggling with glee at a nonsense rhyme, children have immense fun and thoroughly enjoy their learning. They form good relationships and behave well. Parents and carers are well informed about activities and welcomed as partners in their children's progress. Since the previous inspection, the school has created a secure outdoor area dedicated to the Reception classes. Although this is an improvement, it is not yet of as good quality as that for Nursery children who have access to different levels and soft surfaces.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The great majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed positive views about the school. They, and those spoken to, had much praise for the new senior leadership team. Most stated that their children are well supported but a few raised concerns about the effectiveness of the school's behaviour management systems and other support for pupils. Parents and carers of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage greatly appreciate the efforts made to help their children settle in school. Taking suitable care to ensure confidentiality, the inspectors discussed with school leaders all the concerns that were raised. The inspection findings are broadly similar to the views expressed by the majority.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gorse Hall Primary and Nursery 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 84 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 450 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	64	29	35	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	48	57	33	39	1	1	2	2
My school informs me about my child's progress	32	38	45	54	6	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	49	37	44	2	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	40	48	38	45	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	37	42	50	6	7	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	50	38	45	2	2	1	1
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)	39	46	38	45	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	34	40	46	55	2	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	42	35	42	8	10	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	31	43	51	4	5	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	33	39	43	51	1	1	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	57	32	38	2	2	1	1

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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



24 September 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Gorse Hall Primary and Nursery School, Stalybridge, SK15 2DP**

Thank you very much for your warm welcome and the help that you gave to the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our time at Gorse Hall and are pleased that the great majority of you say that you enjoy it too. Yours is a satisfactory school which is going through a lot of changes at the moment. It was good to hear that you and the staff all feel that behaviour has improved but we are well aware that some pupils have not yet developed the skills of self-discipline and respect for others. We have asked the school leaders to work even harder to help them all to develop pride in themselves and improve their relationships with others.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes have a really good time and make good all-round progress. Adults offer you good care and support, for example, helping you move smoothly into your new classes. You have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle. Congratulations on your Healthy School and Green Flag awards, and on being so good at cross-country! Your teachers usually give you interesting things to do in lessons but they do not always set them at quite the right level of difficulty to meet your different needs. We have asked them to make better use of the information they collect about what you can do, and to adapt the activities more accurately so as to help you all make quicker progress in your learning. Not enough of you are reaching the higher levels in mathematics or writing and boys' writing skills are well behind those of the girls.

Your new senior teachers are doing a good job at deciding what the strengths of your school are and what needs to improve. All the staff are working well as a team to make the changes. All of you can help too, by really concentrating on your work and making sure that you all take good care of each other.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Drake

Lead inspector

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