

# Gorsewood Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111176
<b>Local Authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	356873
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Bamber

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	182
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Adrian St Claire
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs L McMillan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Gorsewood Road Murdishaw, Runcorn Cheshire WA7 6ES
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons taught by nine teachers. Meetings were held with members of staff, a group of parents and carers and with pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and its development plan, minutes of governing body meetings, data relating to pupils' progress and policies and procedures. Pupils' work was analysed as were the responses from 43 parental questionnaires and those from Key Stage 2 pupils.

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

- How well pupils in Key Stage 1 were progressing, but especially boys in writing, and those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Whether the recent improvements in Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment and progress are evident currently.
- How well pupils attain in writing throughout the school, especially the more-able.
- How good the school's capacity to sustain further improvement is given the new arrangements for leading the school.

## Information about the school

Gorsewood is of average size for a primary school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above average. A high proportion is known to be entitled to a free school meal. A higher proportion than is found nationally enter or leave the school at times other than normal.

From the beginning of this term, as a result of a job-share arrangement, the school is led by the headteacher for three days each week and by the assistant headteacher for two days. The school has been awarded Healthy School status and the Activemark.

On site there is a privately run pre-school, the provision of which is the subject of a separate inspection and report.

**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?**

**2**

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

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. It is particularly effective in the outstanding care, support and guidance it provides, especially for the significant minority of pupils who are more vulnerable than most. Parents and carers are fulsome in their praise for the way in which their children are looked after at school and for the way the school helps them to enhance their children's learning at home.

Pupils make good academic progress through the school. They generally enter the Reception class with below expected skills, well below in communication and language, and leave Year 6 with broadly average standards. Their attainment in English and mathematics is no higher than average because some pupils find it difficult to write in a different way than they speak, struggle to consolidate and recall basic number facts, and because teachers tend to set the same targets for individual pupils regardless of their prior attainment. In other subjects, pupils make consistently good progress because their good curriculum provides them with many creative opportunities, not least to learn productively outside the classroom.

Pupils feel safe in school and very much appreciate the good safeguarding procedures that add to their sense of security. They are willing participants in sporting activities during and after school, appreciating the benefit of regular exercise. Older pupils take on responsibilities eagerly, proudly contributing to the excellent care provided by the school by being buddies and play leaders. Pupils have a keen sense of right and wrong, behave well overall and are sensitive to the needs of others. Teaching is of good quality overall, which enables pupils to achieve well. Staff are particularly effective in providing relevant, practical tasks to which pupils respond very positively and with evident enjoyment. Well-qualified learning support assistants work well with pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties to enable them to make good progress.

Leaders and managers have a successful determination to continually improve the school's performance and provision. They have taken effective action to address any fall in standards, for example, in Year 2 and Year 6 in 2009, and have continued to enhance curricular provision and to maintain outstanding care, support and guidance since the last inspection. Rigorous and accurate self-evaluation enables the school to identify apt and clear priorities for further improvement. Such clarity of thinking, combined with a successful track record of improvement, indicates that there is a good capacity to improve further.

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

- Raise pupils' attainment in English and mathematics from broadly average to at least above average, especially in writing, by:

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- providing more opportunities for pupils to practise conventional speech in order to enhance their writing skills
- giving pupils of different abilities, especially the more able, learning targets, in mathematics and English that are more appropriate to their needs, and tasks that consistently challenge them
- consolidating pupils' basic number skills, including their accuracy in using multiplication tables.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils enjoy learning and achieve well. They have positive attitudes in lessons, keenly responding to questions and eagerly contributing ideas. They work independently and cooperatively with equal commitment and take pride in academic success. Most behave well in class because they are interested in the work they do, especially when they work practically, either indoors or outside. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) adeptly in many areas of their learning, for example, to present research data, to enhance their writing and in design and technology.

Overall, pupils make good progress, with those who are more vulnerable often achieving very well, as a result of the very good support they receive. After a lapse in standards in 2009, attainment in both Year 2 and Year 6 rose in 2010 with Key Stage 2 pupils progressing much faster than the average in most schools. Key Stage 1 pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and girls in Key Stage 2 considerably improved their attainment compared with 2009. Inspection evidence indicates that these improvements are being maintained. More-able pupils are not always effectively challenged, either through their targets or the tasks they are set. This results in a lower than average proportion attaining the higher Level 3 in the Year 2 teacher assessments or Level 5 in the Year 6 national tests.

Most pupils heed the advice given to them as regards healthy eating and parents and carers report their children's influence on the content of meals at home. They are adequately prepared for the future lives. Their overall attainment and attendance is average but they work effectively in teams, take on responsibilities and show initiative. Their behaviour is good overall, consistently so in lessons, less so in the playground, where some over-boisterous play can lead to some temporary upsets. Pupils reflect thoughtfully, for example, on the cycle of planting, tending and harvesting their vegetable garden. They have a keen sense of fair play and relate to each other and to adults well.

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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>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</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>2</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>2</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?

Most teaching is good. This enables pupils to make good academic progress overall. The positive relationships evident in lessons contribute significantly to pupils' good personal development. Behaviour is managed well. This is particularly important given the higher than average proportion of pupils who find conforming to the school's high expectations of conduct difficult to achieve. Many of these pupils are very well supported by teaching assistants who clearly understand their needs and ensure that they consistently participate in and contribute to lessons. This is a telling example of the school's good promotion of equality of opportunity.

In the best lessons, teachers make very clear the objectives for learning, maintain a brisk pace, check closely on individual pupil's progress and use ICT to capture pupils' interest. High expectations of pupils' work rate and behaviour are met. Where teaching is less successful, pupils are unclear about what they have to do because teachers fail to clarify tasks, opportunities for pupils to practise conventional speech are limited and more-able pupils are insufficiently challenged. The use of assessment is good overall, with some exemplary marking in English and effective opportunities for pupils to self- and peer-assess. However, there are relative weaknesses in target setting for individual pupils, especially for more-able pupils.

The effective curriculum meets most pupils' needs well. It has outstanding aspects that include learning outdoors, both within the confines of the school site and further afield,

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and in the wide range of extra-curricular activities available. Many pupils participate enthusiastically in all these activities. Productive partnerships with outside providers and with local services enhance well the provision for pupils' health, safety and social education. Pupils enjoy learning French and Year 6 pupils use this skill confidently when they visit Paris.

Outstanding care, guidance and support play a significant role in pupils' good academic progress and in their effective personal development. Close partnerships provide excellent support for pupils and their families and make a significant contribution to smooth induction and transition arrangements. They have also influenced improvement in pupils' attendance, which has risen from below average to close to above average over the last three years. The most vulnerable pupils and their families receive outstanding support and guidance.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Accurate self-evaluation conducted thoroughly by school leaders, results in the identification of apt priorities for improvement. Targets set for year groups are challenging, usually met and sometimes exceeded. Performance is checked robustly, leading to recent improvement in pupils' attainment and progress and in good quality teaching and learning. Effective actions taken by senior and middle leaders have resulted in much enrichment to the already good curriculum. The headteacher and assistant headteacher work in close partnership to effectively lead staff and to promote higher performance.

The governing body contributes well to the school's strategic development, in supporting the school and in challenging leaders' decisions and pupils' and staff performance. It seeks good value for money at all times and manages finances prudently. The effective way in which the school engages with parents and carers has a very positive impact on pupils' good achievements and their attendance. Similarly, close partnerships with other schools, providers and agencies, make valuable contributions to pupils' good quality learning, their well-developed personal skills and to their enjoyment in being in school.

Procedures and policies for safeguarding pupils and adults fully meet requirements, and follow best practice. Staff are comprehensively trained and knowledgeable about child protection procedures, and pupils say how secure they feel in the school. The excellent provision for and the good achievement of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities exemplify the school's effective promotion of equal opportunities. The pupils' openness towards people with diverse backgrounds signifies how well discrimination is

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tackled. Pupils' awareness of local community needs and issues, their understanding of fairness in trading practices and their tolerance of people who follow different faiths and traditions, are all enhanced by the school's effective promotion of community cohesion. Resources are used well, pupils' outcomes are good and there is effective provision, some of which is outstanding, all indicating that the school provides good value for money.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children are welcomed warmly in to the Reception class and settle well as a result of effective induction procedures and sensitive provision. Parents and carers are valued as partners in both the settling-in process and as a continual support for their child's development. Most children have weak communication and language skills on entry, with a significant minority lacking in areas of their social, personal and emotional development. As a result of good teaching, assessment and support, children's overall attainment in all areas of their learning is broadly in line with expectations for their age on entry to Year 1. This represents good progress overall and very good in children's communication and language development.

At this stage of the term, provision is well matched to children's needs, with an appropriate emphasis on helping them to settle, follow routines, to relate well to each other and to develop respect for resources and to learn social skills. Good leadership is reflected in this well-tailored provision. Adults are good at modelling language, making a significant contribution to children's good progress in their speaking and early writing skills. However, when children initiate their own learning, adults sometimes intervene insufficiently to ensure that effective learning is taking place. Children are already establishing positive relationships with each other and adults, and children feel secure because their welfare is paramount. Perceptive observations and assessments of children's



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progress and development are systematically recorded, which enables adults to plan appropriate activities to suit each child's needs. Adults work together effectively and closely benefit from the considerable experience and expertise of the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, who is also the assistant headteacher.

*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

A very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire, and all those parents and carers who met with inspectors, expressed positive views of the school's work. Inspectors endorse the lavish praise for: how well the school cares for and supports pupils and those families who experience difficulties; the approachability of staff, including leaders; how safe pupils are and the arrangements for induction and transition. The only concern that more than one parent raised was the effectiveness of the school's handling of unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors followed this issue up by particularly focussing on behaviour, in and out of lessons. In lessons, pupils' behaviour was consistently good. In the playground, it was less consistently so with some boisterous play in evidence. The school acknowledges that on occasion, instances of aggressive behaviour occur in the playground but inspectors' discussions with staff and pupils, and the scrutiny of school's incident records, show that any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with quickly and appropriately.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gorsewood Primary 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 184 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	25	58	17	40	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	31	72	12	28	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	19	44	21	49	0	0	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	47	20	47	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	22	51	16	37	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	19	44	17	40	0	0	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	49	20	47	0	0	0	0
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)	18	42	19	44	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	42	21	49	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	42	18	42	2	5	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	44	19	44	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	21	49	19	44	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	24	56	15	35	2	5	0	0

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.**



8 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Gorsewood Primary School, Runcorn, WA7 6ES**

I would like to thank you on behalf of the inspection team for the friendly welcome you gave us when we inspected your school recently. Yours is a good school, as many of you told us. Here are some of the things that make it good.

- You make good progress in your work and grow into well-behaved, sensible and concerned young citizens.
- Good teaching helps you to make good progress.
- The lovely way you are all looked after, but especially those of you who find learning, behaving well or just life, more difficult than most.
- The very interesting activities that are provided for you, especially learning outside, visits, visitors and clubs.
- The school is well run and that your headteacher and the governing body have good ideas about how to make your school even better.

I have asked the adults who run the school to help you to reach higher standards in English and mathematics by:

- giving you more chances to practise speaking in a way that will help you to write more correctly, especially in full sentences and spelling words properly
- teachers setting you different targets according to how well you are doing with your work, not just the same ones for everyone
- making sure that you know your tables and that you can remember things like number bonds and number order to help you to be more accurate in mathematics.

You can obviously help with all of these, for example, by not using text message spellings in your writing, by speaking in whole sentences when you answer questions or discuss things in class, and by trying really hard to learn your tables.

Thank you again for being so polite and helping us with the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Paul Bamber

Lead Inspector

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