

# Gorse Covert Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111208
<b>Local authority</b>	Warrington
<b>Inspection number</b>	395637
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Alan Parkinson

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>	311
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	David Hart
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Cooke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Gorse Covert Road Birchwood Warrington WA3 6TS
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Alan Parkinson  
Shirley Herring  
Kirsty Haw

Additional Inspector  
Additional Inspector  
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 22 lessons taught by 12 teachers. Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, staff and four members of the governing body. The inspectors looked at the school's self-evaluation evidence, school action plans, documents relating to safeguarding, internal and external pupils' progress data, work in pupils' books and observed the school's work. They analysed 155 questionnaires returned by parents and carers, as well as those returned by pupils and staff.

## Information about the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and the number of pupils whose first language is not believed to be English is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below the national average. The school meets the current floor standards, which are the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. In 2011, the school received the ECO Schools Bronze Award, and the International Schools Award.

The school accommodates before-school and after-school clubs for pupils that are not managed by the governing body. This provision is inspected separately and the inspection report may be found on the Ofsted website.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

### Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because while teaching is good overall, some teaching is no better than satisfactory and not enough is outstanding.
- Pupils’ achievement is good. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress across all areas of learning because of the good teaching that they receive. However, insufficient use of the outdoor learning area prevents even better progress. Pupils continue to make good progress across Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Recently, the school has focused on developing writing skills at Key Stage 1 and mathematical skills at Key Stage 2. As a result, all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, now make good progress in these areas.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide activities that motivate pupils and enable them to succeed. However, teachers do not always ensure there is sufficient pace in lessons to fully engage all pupils in their learning to promote even faster progress. The marking of pupils’ work is not consistent across all subject areas and does not always tell them what they need to do to improve.
- The behaviour and safety of pupils, including their attitudes to learning, are good. Pupils say they feel safe in school and the vast majority of parents and carers support this view.
- The school is well led and managed. The senior leaders are well supported by a proactive governing body and dedicated team of staff. They have a clear understanding of strengths and areas for improvement which is based upon accurate school self-evaluation. The leadership of teaching by senior leaders is effective as is the management of performance. However, the school has not yet fully developed the role of middle managers in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning.

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

- To increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding and raise achievement further by:
  - ensuring that the pace of lessons engages all pupils fully in their learning
  - developing further the role of middle managers in monitoring teaching and learning
  - ensuring pupils are fully aware of their next steps for improvement and how to achieve them
  - further developing the use of the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor provision to enhance learning.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that, while weaker in language skills, are broadly typical for their age. Good provision in the Reception class enables them to progress well in all areas of learning with almost all attaining the levels expected for their age and some exceeding them. In a phonics session, children eagerly joined in to make the sounds of letters shown quickly on flash cards. This enabled them to acquire good knowledge of letters and sounds and successfully develop their reading and writing skills. However, greater use of the outdoor provision would provide more opportunities for developing children's skills and further enhance their learning.

Good progress continues through Key Stage 1, so that by the end of the Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above average. Pupils continue to make good progress through Key Stage 2. They enjoy their learning and are keen to do well. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were developing good writing skills as they worked independently to change a play script into a narrative piece of written work. At Key Stage 2, the attainment of girls is better than boys in reading, writing and mathematics. Although progress in these subjects across the school is good and attainment is above national averages, pupils' overall performance in mathematics is not as consistently strong as in reading and writing. Through its self-evaluation processes and monitoring system to track the progress of pupils, the school appropriately identified the achievement of boys and the development of mathematical skills as areas for improvement. Inspection evidence shows that the steps taken to tackle these priorities, particularly at Key Stage 2, are having a positive impact on performance and gaps are closing. As a result, all groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Parents and carers are accurate in their positive views that their children are making good progress.

In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils collaborated extremely well when working in small groups to create 'human' scatter-graphs. Timed activities kept pupils focused and effective questioning by the teacher appropriately challenged the pupils to check

their knowledge and understanding and to ensure that maximum progress was being made. In addition to taking their reading book home, pupils have homework set each week in spelling and mathematics. This enables them to further develop their reading, writing and mathematical skills and enables parents and carers to support their children's learning at home.

Reading sessions are well organised with a range of purposeful activities that promote pupils' reading skills well. At Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate a clear enjoyment of reading. Pupils take books home and a number said that they read with their parents and carers. By the end of Year 6 pupils' reading is above average.

### **Quality of teaching**

In the best lessons, where sometimes outstanding teaching was seen, teaching is very well organised. Pupils are actively engaged in their learning and teachers' focused support and intervention enable them to make rapid progress. Teachers use effective questioning techniques skilfully to challenge pupils and extend their learning. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson, pupils responded to questions as they discussed what it is like to be part of a community and what they would do if someone breaks the rules. Pupils worked very well together in small groups developing their listening and speaking skills. During their discussions they raised issues about the starving children in Africa, the struggles experienced by some people living in India and the issues of the war in Afghanistan, demonstrating very good awareness of global issues. Where teaching is occasionally satisfactory and less effective, the pace of lessons slows and pupils are not always fully engaged in their learning.

Pupils of all abilities and groupings adopt positive attitudes to learning. Enrichment activities, such as the Year 1 trip to Beeston and the Year 6 trip to Borrowdale, are valued by pupils and provide them with opportunities to develop and apply their skills in reading, writing and mathematics in a different learning environment. These activities also help to promote and develop team building and social skills. In the classroom, the use of role-play engages pupils in their learning and effectively develops their listening and speaking skills.

The marking of pupils' books is most effective when it recognises strengths in their work, informs them what their next steps are to improve, and how to achieve them in order to reach their target levels. However, this good practice, particularly evident in the marking of pupils' literacy work, is not consistently applied across all areas. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and make a significant contribution to learning, especially that of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those identified by the school for additional support. These pupils are taught well.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils speak positively about the school. The vast majority of pupils say they feel safe in school. Parents and carers reflect the pupils' positive views and the vast majority say that their children are kept safe in school and inspection evidence supports this. Pupils have a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They are taught about road safety and not talking to strangers, and have a

good awareness of the issues around social networking sites and cyber-bullying. Pupils say that there is very little bullying and if it occurs it is dealt with quickly and effectively. Parents, carers and pupils agree that behaviour is good. Pupils are very polite and courteous around the school. Relationships between pupils and with adults are good and lead to a calm, friendly environment. Pupils play very well together and develop very good social skills through various cooperative activities. Attendance is above average and punctuality is good.

Weekly award assemblies are valued by the pupils, celebrate their successes and motivate them to work hard. The pupils' have good attitudes to learning. They support each others' learning through very effective collaboration and cooperation. This enables lessons to proceed without interruption. Pupils are given opportunities to help the school community and encourage positive behaviour and attitudes through the school council, Eco council, healthy school council or as 'Playground Friends'.

### **Leadership and management**

The school's senior leaders and effective governing body have a clear vision for further school improvement with a strong focus on teaching and learning and serving its community well. The governing body provides good support and challenge. Its members actively monitor the work of the school and evaluate progress towards its objectives. The school has accurately identified its strengths and areas for improvement through its effective self-evaluation and has used this knowledge well to improve achievement, particularly of mathematics, demonstrating a good capacity to continue to improve. All staff agree that the school is well led and managed.

The school has a clear focus on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Leaders have recently improved the systems to monitor and track the progress of groups and individual pupils through review meetings held each term. They make effective use of data to identify any areas of underachievement and implement targeted support when required. The school's middle managers are proactively engaged in monitoring pupils' progress but their role has not yet been sufficiently developed to include the monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom. This limits their ability to contribute fully to improving teaching, for example, by sharing best practice.

Teachers' subject knowledge is good and the clear improvements in the teaching of mathematics highlight the impact of the school's programme of professional development.

The curriculum is well-planned and meets pupils' needs well. In the Early Years Foundation Stage effective cross-curricular links promote children's development of basic skills. The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop skills in sport, art and music and raises awareness of other cultures through its links with schools in Africa and Spain. This contributes positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The school is very inclusive, promoting equality of opportunity well and tackling discrimination effectively on the rare occasions it may occur. Safeguarding and child protection procedures and policies meet current requirements.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



9 July 2012

Dear Pupils,

### **Inspection of Gorse Covert Primary School, Warrington, WA3 6TS**

On behalf of the inspection team I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and seeing you at work. We are particularly grateful to those of you who came to talk to us at lunchtime and those who read to us.

Gorse Covert is a good school. You told us that you feel safe in school and you enjoy coming to school. Your behaviour and your attitudes towards learning are good. Your attendance is above average. You are very polite and courteous and work well together in the classroom. All of this helps you to make good progress in your learning. The school's leaders make sure that it keeps improving.

The main reason for your good progress is that teaching is good. We have asked your school to make your lessons even better by making more of the teaching outstanding. For example, we want teachers to make sure that you always know the next steps that you have to take in order to improve. We have also asked your school to make greater use of the outdoor area to make learning for the Reception class children even better.

I hope you keep on working hard so you can help to make your school even better. Thank you again for your contribution to the inspection and for your kindness and courtesy to us. We wish all of you the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

Alan Parkinson  
Lead Inspector

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