

Gorse Ride Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	109877
Local authority	Wokingham
Inspection number	378003
Inspection dates	11–12 July 2012
Lead inspector	Margaret Coussins

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	238
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eric Ronney
Headteacher	Sarah Phillips
Date of previous school inspection	11–12 June 2008
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins

Additional inspector

Victor Chaffey

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed sixteen lessons or part lessons totalling approximately eight hours, involving nine teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities, governors and pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school's development plan, its self-evaluation, pupils' progress records and the procedures for safeguarding. Questionnaires from 57 parents and carers were received and analysed along with those from pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Gorse Ride is an average-sized junior school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. A daily after-school club is provided. On 1 September 2012 the school will federate with the infant school that shares the same site.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because, within overall good teaching, a few inconsistencies remain in ensuring that all pupils always make the progress of which they are capable and there are too few opportunities for teachers to share the best practice in teaching across the school.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils make good progress and reach above average levels of attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, learn and progress well.
- Teaching is good. Lessons are well planned to provide stimulating and motivating activities. However, in a few lessons, teachers spend too long asking questions for discussion and so pupils do not always have enough time for independent learning. On occasion, teaching strategies, including questioning, are not targeted precisely enough to meet the needs of all abilities.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. Exemplary behaviour, respect for each other and adults, and pupils' extremely positive attitudes all make a considerable contribution to their learning. Pupils thrive in the caring and inclusive atmosphere of a calm, well-ordered and happy school, which they enjoy coming to, and their enjoyment is reflected in above-average attendance.
- Leadership and management are good overall and, driven by the highly effective leadership of the headteacher, the school has maintained its good overall effectiveness since the previous inspection and made further improvements. There is a strong sense of teamwork across all staff, which effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and academic achievement through a good curriculum and strong partnerships. Targets for the performance of all staff are well linked to school priorities. The school leadership is focused on improving those weaknesses in learning which it has identified.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure pupils consistently make the good and better progress of which they are

capable by:

- providing more opportunities for teachers to share good and outstanding practice
- ensuring that teaching strategies, including questioning, are targeted even more precisely to meet the range of needs of pupils of all abilities
- ensuring that there is sufficient time in lessons for independent learning.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

From broadly average starting points, pupils make good progress, achieve well and reach above average attainment by the time they leave in Year 6. All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, learn and achieve well. However, a few inconsistencies remain in the progress made by pupils in a small number of lessons across the school. Most pupils achieve the expected Level 4 by the end of Year 6, and a higher proportion than found nationally achieves the higher Level 5. In English, writing has been a focus over the past few years and, as a result, is now a strength of the school. The school has worked relentlessly to improve achievement in mathematics with a range of strategies. Pupils' work and school progress records show the positive impact of this work, with achievement in mathematics that matches that in English. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agree that their children make good progress and that the school helps children to develop skills in communication, reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection findings support this positive view.

Pupils' exemplary behaviour, their excellent attitudes and a strong work ethic make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils work together well and support each other. For example, in an English lesson based on *The Highwayman*, pupils worked well in pairs to rehearse a performance of the poem. They read aloud very well with fluency and expression, demonstrating a clear understanding of the content and the rhythm of the language. They listened very attentively to each other and made mature, constructive criticism of others' performance. Pupils' well-developed vocabulary and command of language enable teachers to communicate complex ideas as seen, for example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson on geometric shapes. Pupils make good progress in writing because they are clear about the audience and purpose for their work. Year 6 pupils, who were rehearsing and giving performances of their leaving play, *Pirates of the Curry Bean*, during the inspection, wrote interesting and creative newspaper reports, reviewing the performance. They demonstrated a good understanding of the features of report writing and made good use of alliteration for headlines, for example 'Pirates Perform Perfectly'. Attainment in reading by the end of Year 6 is above average. Pupils read with confidence and enjoyment. They develop good comprehension and higher order reading skills such as reading between the lines to infer and deduce meaning and empathise with characters, as well as skimming and scanning texts to effectively support research skills. Readers of all abilities have a good knowledge of a range of authors and can express preferences for different styles of writing.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is good overall and sometimes outstanding and this has been the usual practice since the previous inspection. Lessons are well planned to provide motivating activities that engage pupils well and promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils appreciate the humour that teachers build into their lessons, which make, as many pupils said, 'learning fun and interesting'. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions and take risks in their learning as they know their contributions are valued. 'It's okay if you are wrong as long as you try because they (teachers) help you get it right.'

Most lessons provide a good pace to learning and appropriate challenges to meet the needs of all pupils. Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning, particularly for that of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. They work on a one-to-one basis or in small groups, providing additional prompts and support to ensure that pupils are fully engaged in all activities and learning. In good and outstanding lessons, teachers ensure there is a good balance between their input and the time pupils have for independent learning and working things out for themselves. This was demonstrated very well in a Year 3 mathematics lesson on Venn diagrams and a Year 4 English lesson on using causal connectives in writing. In most lessons, teachers' skilled questioning and opportunities for pupils to share ideas help pupils to extend their learning. In a few lessons, however, questions are not modified or targeted to ensure appropriate challenge for more able pupils or appropriate support for others and, in addition, too long is spent on these activities, which restricts the amount of time pupils have for independent learning.

Marking and feedback are used effectively and pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' progress in lessons, which they do with great skill. For example, Year 6 pupils read each other's newspaper reviews and wrote sensible, mature and constructive criticism, for example, 'A great piece of work, but add some similes.' Reading is taught well at all levels, including guided reading sessions where teachers work with groups to teach comprehension and a range of reading strategies, and develop more advanced reading skills with older pupils. Year 3 pupils discussed how much they enjoyed reading in buddy sessions, where they read with older pupils. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers and most pupils agree that teaching is good and the inspection findings support this positive view.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Almost all parents and carers and most pupils agree that pupils behave well in school. Inspection findings support this positive view as inspectors judged pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school as exemplary. School records show that this is typical of behaviour over time. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and respond extremely well to teachers' high expectations. They appreciate the culture of praise and positive reinforcement of high standards of behaviour. Pupils are friendly, polite and courteous and very enthusiastic about all aspects of school life, which they were eager to share with inspectors. They are great ambassadors for their school, of which they are very proud. Although playtimes and lunchtimes are well supervised, pupils manage their own behaviour very well with little need for adult intervention. They work and play together very well in a supportive and caring environment and,

as a result, say they feel very safe in school. The vast majority of parents and carers are confident that the school keeps their children safe. In discussion, pupils demonstrated that they have an excellent awareness of the different sorts of bullying that could occur, including cyber and prejudiced-based bullying. They say that there is no bullying in school, but are confident that, should any incidents occur, teachers would act swiftly and fairly to sort them out.

Leadership and management

A strong, supportive leadership and management team, including the governing body, shares ambitious vision and high expectations for the school. There is a strong commitment, driven by the headteacher's strong leadership, to provide the best possible learning experiences for all the pupils and to overcome any barriers to learning for pupils who may be vulnerable. As a result, equality of opportunity is promoted well and pupils learn in a safe, secure and supportive environment without fear of discrimination. This is underpinned by excellent relationships between staff and pupils, strong promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and a broad, balanced and enriched curriculum. Parents and carers and pupils appreciate and benefit from the after-school club as well as provision during the day of a lunchtime club and nurture group.

Leaders and managers have worked successfully to maintain the quality of the school's work and pupils' achievement since the last inspection. School improvement planning is clearly focused on the right priorities as a result of rigorous monitoring and accurate self-evaluation. Leadership capacity is developed well and performance is managed effectively. Monitoring of teaching and learning highlights the right priorities for improvement and is focused on improving weaknesses where they have been identified. There are too few opportunities, however, for teachers to share the best, most effective and successful practice. There is well-targeted professional development, which has a considerable impact on achievement, as shown in mathematics, and the school's successful work to extend the use of peer and self-assessment, which was an area for improvement in the previous inspection report. This track record, together with the school's accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses, demonstrates the school's capacity for further improvement. Arrangements for safeguarding meet all statutory requirements. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers rightly feel that the school takes good care of their children. A parent summed up the views of many with the comment, 'At all times my children have been happy, well cared for and have learnt well from a strong, supportive team.'

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).

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.



13 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gorse Ride Junior School, Wokingham RG40 4JJ

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school. We really enjoyed visiting your lessons, talking to you and your teachers and looking at the work you have been doing. You are very polite, friendly and interesting to talk to and we appreciated the way you helped us find out about your school. Thank you also to those of you who completed the questionnaire.

We agree with you, your parents and carers and your teachers that Gorse Ride is a good school. You make good progress and reach higher standards compared to other pupils nationally by the time you leave. You have worked hard to improve your mathematics skills this year, and well done for that. We were impressed with the good quality of your writing. Your behaviour is outstanding and you have excellent attitudes to learning. Your school takes very good care of you so that you feel safe. Your headteacher does a very good job in running the school and she is supported very well by all the other leaders and managers, including the governors. You told us that you enjoy coming to school, your teachers make lessons fun and interesting and you learn a lot.

Although the school is doing well there are still things it can improve. Your teachers are good at asking you questions that help you learn well and giving you time to share your ideas, but sometimes some of you need different questions that provide you with just the right amount of challenge. We have also asked teachers to make sure that they give you enough time in lessons to get on with your independent work. These are things that will make sure you all make the progress of which you are capable in every lesson. One more thing we have asked is for the leaders and managers of your school to help teachers share ideas with each other so that all your lessons are as good as the very best ones we saw.

You can help by continuing to work hard and do your best at all times.

Finally, we would like to thank you again and wish you well in the future.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins
Lead inspector

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