

# Gorse Hall Primary and Nursery School

Forester Drive, Stalybridge, Cheshire SK15 2DP.

**Inspection dates** 18-19 September 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and in the progress made by significant groups of pupils.
- Pupils, especially the more-able, do not make sufficiently rapid progress towards attaining higher National Curriculum levels.
- Attainment in writing, particularly for boys, is weaker than pupils' attainment in reading and mathematics.
- Information on pupils' learning is not acted upon quickly enough to make up for gaps in some pupils' learning.

### The school has the following strengths

- Progress in mathematics, for girls and for pupils with special educational needs in Key Stage 1, is good.
- The good quality teaching and care in the Early Years Foundation Stage make sure that children settle down quickly and happily, and make good progress in their play and learning.
- Pupils' attendance is above average and much improved.
- Pupils feel safe and are very welcoming and polite. Their cultural development is strong because of the wide range of extra activities they take part in.
- Senior leaders and the governing body have a clear vision for school improvement that is beginning to improve the quality of teaching and to raise attainment, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. The school is improving.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 22 lessons of which one was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors listened to children read, made brief visits to a series of lessons and scrutinised pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, senior leaders and other staff.
- Inspectors took account of the 45 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to the most recent parental survey carried out by the school.
- The inspection team observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including information on pupils' progress, school self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, records of monitoring of teaching, attendance and behaviour logs and documentation in relation to pupils' safeguarding and child protection.

## Inspection team

Marie Cordey, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kirsteen Rigby

Additional Inspector

Janet Keefe

Additional Inspector

## Information about this school

- Gorse Hall is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average, and the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is 12%, which is lower than the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations of attainment and progress.

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

- Ensure that all teaching is good or better by July 2013, in order to raise attainment levels across subjects especially for the more-able pupils, through:
  - raising expectations of pupils' achievement and providing more opportunities for pupils to be challenged to produce high quality work
  - encouraging pupils to work independently and to discuss learning in depth with their peers
  - enthusing and inspiring pupils in their learning
  - ensuring that activities are closely matched to the interests and abilities of all pupils
  - establishing a consistent application of the school's behaviour-management systems in all classrooms.
- Raise attainment, in writing, particularly for boys, by:
  - focusing more on boys' involvement and enjoyment in writing at greater length
  - providing tailored resources, particularly books and in information and communication technology, to engage the interests and abilities of boys in particular
  - focusing more on pupils' acquisition of skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar, sentence and paragraph construction.
- Further improve the leadership and management of the school by:
  - setting very precise performance-management targets and success criteria to improve the quality of teaching for all groups of pupils
  - ensuring that tracking information is used effectively to identify and follow through on any gaps in pupils' learning.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy the many opportunities available for them to link letters and sounds, develop their imagination and begin to understand numbers and counting. Provision for creative play and learning is particularly good indoors. Consequently, children achieve well and improve their language, communication and social skills in a reassuring and attractive environment.
- Overall, pupils' attainment is in line with the national average; the attainment of girls is well above average and the attainment of boys is average in mathematics and in reading but below average in writing. Few of the more-able pupils reach the higher levels in English and mathematics, which partly reflects their starting points but also a lack of consistent challenge in lessons.
- From starting points on entry to Year 1 that vary between above or in-line with their age, pupils make expected progress overall. A specific school focus on the achievement of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has been supported by the use of the pupil premium. A rapid identification of these pupils' particular requirements has led to challenging actions to accelerate progress. As a result these pupils make expected progress overall but good progress in Key Stage 1.
- Attainment in reading and mathematics is in line with national expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 while their writing skills are a little lower. The school has recently provided more resources to develop pupils' reading skills but there is still a shortage of materials to reflect the interests and abilities of all pupils. In mathematics, pupils' work is well-presented and they demonstrate a good grasp of mental mathematics as well as problem-solving and investigational skills.
- Evidence in pupils' books demonstrates weaknesses in spelling, punctuation, grammar, sentence and paragraph construction and in the extent to which boys write in depth. Some of these gaps in learning are not made up as pupils move through Key Stage 2 and their writing, especially for boys, remains weaker than their attainment in other subjects.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Some teaching is of good quality but where it is less effective, assessment is not used sufficiently well to pinpoint accurately exactly what pupils already know and understand or whether there are gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills that need to be filled. Teachers do not check pupils' understanding of their work frequently enough and questioning is too often concentrated on a few individual pupils. This slows pupils' progress.
- In the better lessons pupils are challenged to think for themselves and are inspired to produce their best. In a Year 5 literacy lesson good quality teaching clearly demonstrated how writing standards could be improved through challenging and well-planned activities, carefully prepared to coincide with pupils' abilities and their interests. Pupils were expected to be able to work independently as well as to discuss, for example, how to demonstrate high order writing skills in a spirit of intellectual debate.
- Largely accurate on-going assessment ensures that activities and resources are broadly matched to differing needs and abilities. Accurately targeted interventions and skilled support provided by teaching assistants are beginning to improve progress. However, this is not consistent and, therefore, most pupils make no better than expected progress. This includes disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, and those for whom the pupil premium provides support.
- Marking is regular and helpful for the most part. Occasionally, teachers' comments are too generous, especially when pupils' work output is minimal. Work in pupils' books demonstrates

that in too many classes the same level of work is expected despite the range of abilities. Opportunities for pupils to mark their own work, as well as that of their classmates are now more plentiful and are helping pupils to understand exactly what they need to do in order to improve their work.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** requires improvement

- Pupils behave courteously and politely as they welcome visitors and move around the school. The 'Always' behaviour system contributes to promoting pupils' social skills as well as their appreciation of the rewards that good behaviour brings. This is not applied consistently or thoroughly enough in some lessons where pupils' attitude to learning deteriorates, they become restless and their work rate slows. This type of low-level disruption occurs when teaching is not as effective.
- Pupils feel safe and cared for. The vast majority of parents agree that the school keeps their children safe.
- Pupils get on well together and there are very few examples of bullying or racism. Such incidents are recorded and acted upon.
- Attendance has improved significantly, especially for pupils supported through the pupil premium. The school's effective partnerships with families are central to the school's successful strategies to improve attendance.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- A relatively new senior leadership team includes subject coordinators. Leaders are strongly determined to improve teaching in order to raise attainment and this commitment is shared by staff.
- At its heart, the school's strategy is to make sure improvement is strongly embedded throughout the school. This is the case in the Early Years Foundation Stage and, for the most part, in Key Stage 1. As a result signs of improvement are very clear in these areas. It is beginning to have an impact in improving progress in Key Stage 2 although the effect of this is not yet as evident. Tracking information is not used consistently or effectively enough to identify and follow through on any gaps in pupils' learning.
- The school is an inclusive one and equality of opportunity is at the centre of the school's work. Differences in the achievement of significant groups of pupils are key priorities and the school is beginning to make headway in reducing any gaps, especially for younger pupils.
- Links between performance-management systems and professional development opportunities for all staff are rooted in improving the quality of teaching and they are having a positive impact. Nevertheless, performance-management targets and success criteria are too general to provide a sharply enough focused tool to increase the rate of school improvement. For example, they are not specific enough in quantifying exactly what expectations are for raising attainment of the more-able pupils and in writing, especially for boys.
- Partnerships with local schools are facilitated by the appropriate support of the local authority. These provide support and challenge and have contributed to the steps taken by the school to improve pupils' outcomes.
- The curriculum has been enhanced to promote pupils' involvement in their learning and to ensure that their literacy skills, in particular, are developed across subjects. The adaptations are having a noticeable impact on pupils' reading and mathematical skills and are also beginning to improve their writing skills.

- Enrichment activities are a strength of the school. Pupils are keen to talk about the many sports clubs and their successes in competitions. They relish the wide variety of after-school clubs, residential trips and outings to museums and the theatre. This makes a positive contribution to their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development and is particularly evident in their rising confidence and awareness of different cultures.
  - The local community is very much a part of school life especially in the numerous 'eco' activities varying from the gardening club to tidying up the local area.
  - The largely positive feedback from parents shows how much they appreciate what the school does for their children. Parental workshops, an informative website and parents' evenings provide helpful guidance on how they can support their children's learning. A small number of parents have some concerns, for example about the behaviour of pupils. Inspectors found that although pupils are very polite and welcoming, there is some restlessness in lessons when pupils are not clear about what is expected of them.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - Members of the governing body demonstrate a solid understanding of their statutory responsibilities and are very supportive of the school. Governors are diligent, for example, in ensuring that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
    - Governors are committed to school improvement. They are involved in self-evaluation and increasingly challenging when holding senior leaders to account for school improvement.
    - Financial resources, including the pupil premium, are managed effectively.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	106188
<b>Local authority</b>	Tameside
<b>Inspection number</b>	405024

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	458
<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>	September 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 338 4262
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