

Gorsemoor Primary School

Gorsemoor Road, Heath Hayes, Cannock, WS12 3TG

Inspection dates 9–10 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Children make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because teaching, leadership and management are all outstanding for this age group.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, and some is outstanding. As a result, pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well.
- Attainment is usually at least above, and in most years significantly above average in Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils behave extremely well. They are very proud of their school, thoroughly enjoy learning, and they feel very safe.
- Parents are very satisfied with the school. They say that their children make good progress, that they are happy and safe at school and the school looks after them well.
- Senior leaders manage teachers' performance well. They have been successful in improving teaching and learning, and extremely successful in improving provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Governors support the school well. They ask searching questions about data and visit the school regularly to gain information first hand.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always move pupils on to their tasks soon enough in lessons, or ensure that the most able pupils in each set have hard enough work to do.
- Support staff do not always help pupils enough in whole-class sessions.
- Strategic planning is not sharp enough. The main messages arising from tracking pupils' progress, the priorities in the school development plan, and the school's self-evaluation information are obscured by too much detail.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 28 lessons. Five of these were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Inspectors also observed playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Discussions were held with pupils, governors, staff and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 60 responses to the online parental survey (Parent View), and of comments made by parents during informal discussions at the start of the day.
- The 55 returns completed by staff were also taken into account.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including information about pupils' progress and attendance, the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation document, documents relating to safeguarding and records of visits made by the local authority.
- The work in pupils' books was examined and sessions were sampled where pupils were learning letters and sounds (phonics). Inspectors also listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Doris Bell, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Tracey Kneale	Additional Inspector
Glen Goddard	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. In Years 3 to 6, they are taught in ability groups for English and mathematics, and mixed-ability groups for all other subjects. Up to Year 2, they are also taught in ability groups for phonics.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average as is the proportion supported at school action plus or who have a statement of special educational needs. These proportions vary from year to year.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding from the government, known as the pupil premium, is below average. This funding is for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and children with a parent in the armed forces.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A privately run breakfast and after-school club operates on the school premises.
- There have been several staff changes since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher, as a local leader in education, supports a small number of other schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by making sure that:
 - all teachers keep introductions to lessons sharp in order to give pupils more time to show what they know, understand and can do
 - the most-able pupils in each ability set always have hard enough work to do to take their learning even further
 - support staff help pupils equally well in all parts of lessons, including whole-class sessions.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management and sharpen strategic planning by:
 - simplifying the systems for tracking pupils' progress so that information about progress in and across different year groups is more easily accessible
 - refining the school development plan so that: the main priorities are not obscured by too much detail; the criteria against which progress towards the priorities is to be measured focus on outcomes for pupils instead of only on improving provision
 - summarising school self-evaluation more succinctly, so that the text shows more clearly why a specific grade has been given.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills that are broadly as expected for their age. The learning that then takes place is outstanding. It results in them starting Year 1 well ahead of where they are expected to be in all aspects of their learning.
- The very close working partnership between teachers in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 1 very successfully ensures that transition between these two years is seamless. Attainment in Year 2 is significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Progress is good throughout Key Stage 2. In the four years up to 2011, attainment was significantly above average in Year 6, although not consistently so in both English and mathematics. It dropped to average in 2012, except in writing, where it was significantly above average at the higher Level 5.
- Early indications from the results of the national tests and assessments for 2013 indicate that attainment has risen in English and mathematics, and even more pupils have reached the higher levels. This shows that good progress has been maintained over time.
- The latest published data at the time of the inspection indicate that pupils who left school in 2012 made less progress from Year 3 to 6 than in the large majority of schools. The inspection team investigated reasons for this and considered evidence provided by the school. This showed there was an error in the school's submission of writing data, which, although reported, convincingly evidenced, and checked by the local authority, was not changed. Given the improvements in 2013 and the long-term record of achievement at Key Stage 2, the team judged that pupils are achieving well over time.
- Children are immersed in literacy skills from the moment they start school. They read fluently and expressively from an early age, and have an excellent understanding of the sounds that letters and combinations of letters make (phonics). The outcomes of the latest phonics screening for pupils in Year 1 are higher than last year.
- Pupils develop good comprehension skills, although support staff sometimes forget to question them about what they are reading in order to develop these skills further. Nevertheless, by Year 6, pupils love reading, and write using a wide range of vocabulary to suit audience and purpose. Spelling, grammar, punctuation and handwriting are all equally well developed.
- The focus on solving mathematical problems related to real-life situations is improving progress in mathematics. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the challenges they receive, for example, in Year 5, where they worked out profit and loss, researched the best deals on mobile phones, and selected what stationery they could buy with a limited budget.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress. Their learning is carefully tailored to their individual needs and support programmes are monitored regularly to ensure they are working. Staff are trained in different aspects of special needs so they can offer good support to each pupil.
- In 2012, the gap between pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium and other pupils was much narrower than the national gap at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, pupils for

whom the school received pupil premium funding were over a year behind in English and two and a half terms behind in mathematics. The school has used its pupil premium funding well to address these issues. For example, it secured more one-to-one tuition for pupils who needed it, and employed an additional part-time teacher so that pupils can be taught in smaller groups in Year 6. Current assessment data show there is now little difference between pupils eligible for the funding and those who are not.

The quality of teaching is good

- Outstanding teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage prepares children exceptionally well for Year 1. Staff are skilled at questioning children to move their learning on without taking over what they are doing.
- Relationships are excellent. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and work rate. They prepare work that meets the pupils' needs, and engender in the pupils a real enthusiasm for learning and a strong desire to do well.
- Probing questioning deepens pupils' thinking, as does the good practice of allowing pupils time to talk to each other about what they are learning. Pupils use these opportunities well to clarify their thoughts before sharing them with the class.
- Teaching and support staff mostly work well together to get the best from the pupils. However, support staff do not always help pupils well enough in whole-class sessions. Additionally, work given to the more-able pupils in each of the ability sets is not always hard enough to extend their learning as much as possible.
- Learning proceeds at a fast pace in most lessons. When pace slows, it is usually because introductions are too long and pupils are itching to get on with their tasks. Their behaviour never falters, however, even when this happens.
- Teachers are adept at adjusting learning during lessons in response to how well pupils are doing. They use assessment information well to determine next steps in learning. Their marking ensures that pupils know what they need to do to improve. They involve pupils well in assessment and marking so that pupils know how to improve their work themselves.
- Reading, including phonics, is taught exceptionally well. Pupils are shown how reading extensively for pleasure and for research helps to improve their writing. They use books and the internet extensively to support their learning in different subjects.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils are extremely happy at school. Their attendance is above average. Their exemplary attitudes are fostered very successfully from the moment they start. The youngest children quickly learn to work and play together, and were often observed 'teaching' each other.
- Throughout the school, pupils confidently engage each other and adults in conversation. They are incredibly respectful and readily support each other, including in their learning. For example, when pupils in Year 6 were marking each other's work, they followed their teacher's excellent example by giving sensitive, constructive criticism on how to improve it.
- Pupils say that disruptions to their lessons due to poor behaviour are unheard of, and that

bullying, racism, discrimination of any sort does not happen in their school. They understand what bullying is and the different forms it can take, and know what to do should they hear of or experience any.

- Pupils feel very safe in school. The school teaches them how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet, social networking sites and mobile phones. They make a very strong contribution to school life, readily accepting responsibility, for example, as school and eco councillors. The school values and acts on their views, for example, developing the nurture garden and the quiet area, so that they have places to sit quietly and reflect.
- Pupils also reflect on their learning and appreciate the help they get from their teachers. They know their targets, the levels they are at, and what they need to do to move to the next level. Their 'Next Steps' books keep them on track in these things. They use their literacy and numeracy skills well in different subjects.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have high expectations of staff and pupils. Their expectations are met well by a strong team that wants the best for the pupils.
- Senior leaders' checks on teaching and learning are accurate, and action points show staff how to improve. Teachers are involved in joint observations with senior staff. This gives them the opportunity to learn from each other and become better teachers. Staff also benefit from well-targeted professional development opportunities.
- The school ensures equality of opportunity for all. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. The learning environment is warm and welcoming, and good-quality displays celebrate achievement in and out of school. As one parent said, 'It's a big school with a small school feel about it.'
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate, but the text justifying the judgements does not always match them. The school development plan has the correct priorities but they are lost among a plethora of other information, and the intended outcomes focus on improving provision rather than on improving pupils' progress.
- Systems for tracking pupils' progress give good information about individual pupils, which the school uses well to improve individual progress. The systems do not give clear enough information about different year groups' achievement over time.
- Everything possible is done to ease transition from one year group to the next and on to high school. The transition from Reception to Year 1, and from Year 2 to Year 3, is particularly effective. This is because staff from those year groups meet when assessments are being done so they have a clear understanding of what pupils need to do next.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is managed well. The staff responsible work together well to ensure the pupils' good progress.
- Subjects are well planned to meet the pupils' needs. Due emphasis is given to literacy and numeracy, including in topic work, which also opens pupils' minds to different faiths, cultures and ways of life at home and abroad. The wide range of experiences in and outside of the normal school day further enhances pupils' learning and personal development.

- The local authority supports the school as and when needed. It considers the school to be good and uses the headteacher as a local leader in education.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors know the school well. They understand how to interpret data about pupils' performance, and how to support and challenge the school to ensure pupils' good progress. They check the quality of teaching and learning, and support the headteacher in managing teachers' performance and making decisions about pay. They manage the school's finances well and check that all spending, including pupil premium money, is securely aimed at improving progress. They keep up to date with training, are vigilant in ensuring that safeguarding procedures meet current requirements, and have developed their own action plan to help them fulfil their roles even more effectively.

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

Unique reference number	124183
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	413024

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	554
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Walden
Headteacher	Paul Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	16 June 2010
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