

Inspection of a good school: Gorsewood Primary School

Gorsewood Road, Murdishaw, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 6ES

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 May 2023

Outcome

Gorsewood Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in the caring, purposeful and exciting environment of this school. They value the friendships that they have with their peers. They also respect the positive relationships that they enjoy with staff. Pupils are happy at school.

Pupils learn to appreciate Britain's cultural and religious diversity. They understand the importance of treating people fairly. Discrimination, including racism and homophobic bullying, rarely happens. If bullying takes place, leaders stop it from happening immediately. Pupils feel safe in school.

Pupils respond well to leaders' high expectations of their behaviour. Pupils behave sensibly during playtimes, listen carefully in class and welcome visitors warmly. Leaders also expect pupils to achieve highly. Most pupils learn well across the curriculum.

Pupils are responsible and active citizens. They often plan events, such as cake sales and non-uniform days, to raise funds for different charities. Pupils respect their community, which they keep litter-free. They relish their visits to museums, theatres, a zoo, a castle and other local places of interest. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are looking forward to their forthcoming trip to Cardiff, which includes a visit to the Welsh Assembly.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders aim to nurture, inspire and challenge all pupils to have the confidence to 'dream, believe and achieve'. Leaders have devised a suitably ambitious, broad and balanced curriculum. They have thought carefully about the knowledge and skills that they expect pupils to learn in each subject. They have ordered this knowledge carefully so it is taught in a logical manner. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well. That said, due to previous weaknesses in one or two curriculum areas, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge. This hinders them from building a secure body of knowledge in these subjects.

Across most of the curriculum, teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects that

they teach. They devise lesson activities that enable pupils to build on what they know already. Teachers check that pupils have understood key information before moving on to new learning.

Leaders work closely with teachers, parents and carers to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND quickly. Leaders and staff work in partnership with parents and external organisations to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the help and support that they need. Teachers adapt lesson activities so that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers. These pupils achieve well.

Leaders place a high priority on reading. They have invested heavily in a wide range of reading materials, including novels, poems and factual books.

Pupils in key stage 1, and children in the Reception class, are enthusiastic about their daily phonics sessions. They quickly learn the sounds that letters represent. Staff ensure that the books pupils read match the letters and sounds they know. This helps pupils to read unfamiliar words confidently and accurately. Pupils who find reading difficult are given the support that they need to catch up with their peers. Most pupils learn to read fluently and accurately.

Pupils behave well and are attentive in lessons. Children in the Reception Year cooperate well with their peers and listen carefully to their teachers. Pupils' learning is rarely affected by poor behaviour. However, some pupils' attendance remains stubbornly low. These pupils are missing out on important learning. Gaps in their knowledge are widening.

Pupils benefit from an exciting array of extra-curricular activities which stimulate their interests. Pupils enjoy different clubs such as cricket, drama, sewing, yoga and dance. Pupils embrace their leadership roles. For example, digital leaders help their teachers and their peers with coding and 'de-bugging' issues. Also, the junior safety officers give talks to their peers on road safety. Pupils learn about healthy relationships, as well as the risks associated with the use of alcohol and tobacco. Older pupils understand the potential dangers of gang affiliation, including knife crime.

Governors know the school well. They understand the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors provide effective challenge and support to leaders.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel that leaders are mindful of staff's workload and mental health. Parents speak highly of the school. They told the inspector that their children are safe and learning well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are highly aware of potential safeguarding risks within the local area. They ensure that stringent safeguarding systems and procedures are in place and adhered to by staff.

Leaders make certain that staff are familiar with the school's safeguarding policies, as well as the government's latest guidelines on keeping pupils safe. Staff are alert to any signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Staff record and report any concerns that they have about a pupil immediately. Leaders follow up swiftly on any concerns.

Leaders take prompt action to provide support for vulnerable pupils and their families. They make referrals to external agencies when required.

Pupils understand the need to be cautious when using electronic devices and accessing the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils are routinely absent from school. This hampers their learning. Leaders should ensure that they build on their existing strategies to promote good attendance so that absence levels decrease, and pupils benefit from all that is on offer at school.
- As a result of the weaknesses in the previous curriculums, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge and skills in one or two subjects. This hinders pupils from gaining a deep body of knowledge in these subjects. Leaders should ensure that teachers identify and address the gaps in pupils' knowledge so that they are ready to access new learning.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	111176
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10291408
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	182
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mark Dennett
Headteacher	Emma Jackson
Website	www.gorsewood.halton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9 May 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders make use of one registered alternative provision.
- Since the previous inspection, the senior leadership team has been reorganised. Also, a new chair of the governing body has been appointed.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher and other school leaders.
- The inspector met with members of the governing body. He spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector met with pupils to discuss their learning in some other subjects.

- The inspector observed pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector met with parents and carers. He reviewed the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.
- The inspector spoke to safeguarding leaders about the reporting and recording of any safeguarding incidents. He talked with pupils about their safety and welfare. The inspector examined a range of policies and documents. He also scrutinised safeguarding information, including the school's safeguarding policy.

Inspection team

Lenford White, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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