

Inspection of Gorse Covert Primary School

Gorse Covert Road, Birchwood, Warrington, Cheshire WA3 6TS

Inspection dates: 13 to 14 June 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils said that Gorse Covert Primary School is a happy and safe place to learn. They are warmly welcomed each morning by staff. Pupils said that adults really care for their well-being.

Pupils respond appropriately to the high expectations that leaders have for their behaviour. Pupils' conduct around the school is calm and orderly. They are respectful of one another and they work together purposefully. Although there are occasions when pupils fall out with each other, any misbehaviour, including incidents of bullying, are dealt with effectively by staff.

Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils' learning, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This includes for those pupils in the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision).

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum for pupils. Pupils are keen to learn. Typically, they achieve well. Children in the early years are well prepared for the demands of Year 1.

Pupils enjoy a range of interesting enrichment activities that have been designed to complement the subjects that they study. Leaders choose activities carefully to promote pupils' wider personal development. For example, pupils develop their resilience when working on their mental health journals. There is a diverse range of extra-curricular clubs on offer too. These include engineering, science and judo.

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

Leaders have skilfully redesigned the curriculum offer to ensure that new subject content builds more effectively on pupils' prior learning. The curriculum is broad and balanced, including in the early years. The curriculum suitably reflects most pupils' learning needs, including those pupils in the specially resourced provision.

In most subjects, leaders have clearly defined what they want pupils to learn. They have established a logical order for teachers to deliver new information. In these subjects, teachers regularly revisit subject content so that pupils can recall and embed prior learning. For example, in geography, pupils could confidently recall physical features of a place and then transfer these onto their own sketch maps.

In a small number of subjects, however, leaders have not fully defined the key knowledge that they want pupils to learn. This means that some teachers are unsure of what they should teach and in what order. Consequently, some pupils do not develop the depth of subject knowledge of which they are capable.

Across most subjects, leaders have appropriately focused on developing pupils' subject-specific vocabulary. This is helping more pupils to explain their thinking in a mature and increasingly sophisticated way. Teachers' checks on pupils'

understanding are also typically effective. These checks help most teachers to identify and to reinforce any weaker aspects of pupils' learning before moving on to new content. As a result, most pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their learning.

Leaders have appropriately prioritised the development of pupils' reading knowledge. For example, in the early years, there is a strong focus on developing children's understanding of language and communication skills. This starts in the Reception class, where children are well prepared for the phonics programme that they encounter when they move into Year 1.

Teachers check carefully on pupils' learning and address any gaps in their phonics knowledge quickly and effectively. There is suitable support in place to help pupils who find reading more difficult, including those pupils in the specially resourced provision. By the end of key stage 2, most pupils become confident and fluent readers.

Leaders have clear systems in place to identify pupils who may have specific needs. They ensure that pupils with SEND are supported well to access the same curriculum as their peers. Leaders ensure that pupils with SEND are included in all aspects of school life. This includes those pupils in the specially resourced provision.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards school and towards their learning. There is little low-level disruption in classes. Pupils typically focus well on their work and are engaged in their learning.

Leaders and governors have implemented a range of strategies to support pupils' well-being. Staff continually check on vulnerable pupils and focus on building pupils' confidence and self-esteem. In addition, pupils are given a range of responsibilities around the school, such as digital leaders, playground friends or house representatives. Pupils take pride in carrying out their duties. The wide range of visits and visitors that leaders organise develop pupils' appreciation of their own and others' cultures.

Staff appreciate the support that they receive from leaders. Staff value the opportunities that they have to learn from other staff across the trust to help them to improve their own practice.

Trustees and governors offer effective challenge and support to leaders. Governors ask pertinent questions of leaders to establish how well pupils learn. For example, governors understand the difference that the specially resourced provision is making for those pupils with SEND.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The safeguarding training that staff receive ensures that they remain vigilant and that they understand the signs and symptoms of potential abuse in pupils.

Leaders ensure that pupils and their families receive early help and support from outside agencies, when necessary. Leaders continually review their safeguarding arrangements to improve how well they protect pupils' welfare.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations. They understand the dangers of technology and social media.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not finalised their curriculum thinking in a few subjects. This means that, occasionally, some pupils do not develop the depth of subject knowledge that they could. Leaders should finalise their curriculum thinking in these remaining subjects so that pupils achieve even more highly.

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	147389
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	10294418
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	232
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julie Bennion
Headteacher	Catherine Cooke
Website	www.gorsecovert.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school has a specially resourced provision for pupils in key stage 1 with autism. The local authority commissions places for pupils. The specially resourced provision caters for six children.
- Gorse Covert Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2019. When its predecessor school, Gorse Covert Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school is part of the One Community Trust.
- School leaders do not currently make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other areas.
- An inspector listened to pupils read to a trusted adult.
- The lead inspector met with senior leaders, the chair of trustees and the chief executive officer of the One Community Trust. She met with the chair, vice-chair and other members of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.
- Inspectors observed pupils as they moved around the site and during lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's self-evaluation and action planning documentation, as well as a range of other information.
- Inspectors conducted a review of safeguarding, including an evaluation of the school's policies and procedures to keep pupils safe, training records, recruitment checks and record-keeping.
- Inspectors reviewed behaviour logs and leaders' approach to pupils' wider personal development.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and carers at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Moira Atkins, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Gaynor Rennie

Ofsted Inspector

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