



# Gomersal St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided First and Nursery School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 107747  
**Local Authority** Kirklees  
**Inspection number** 287904  
**Inspection dates** 14–15 February 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Joe Peacock

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Shirley Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Gomersal, Cleckheaton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9		West Yorkshire BD19 4NA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01274 335260
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	152	<b>Fax number</b>	01274 335259
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Ms Di Lightowler
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Susan Scott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2001		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

Located in a residential village in a rural area of West Yorkshire, the school is smaller than average, with almost all pupils being of a White British background. The number entitled to free school meals is above average and there is an average number who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school enjoys particularly close links with St Mary's Church.

## **Key for inspection grades**

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. It provides good value for money. The headteacher has been the inspiration and driving force for creating the very special family atmosphere that exists in school today. Visitors are treated to the most cheerful and warmest of welcomes from their first contact with the school office staff. Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school.

The school is fairly accurate in judging itself to be good in all areas but has been too modest in its judgements for some areas. The quality of care, support and guidance and the curriculum are outstanding and have a major impact on pupils' personal development and well-being, which is also outstanding.

The good manners and politeness of pupils are a joy to see and experience. Excellent relationships exist between teachers and their pupils and pupils' positive attitude towards their learning contribute very effectively to the high quality of their personal development and well-being. They readily embrace the St Mary's code of conduct and are proud of their school and its growing reputation for extremely well-behaved pupils. All have a good knowledge and understanding of different cultures and world religions. Community links, especially with the local Church and other schools are strong. Attendance is in line with that for most schools. Effective action has been taken to eliminate unauthorised absence and pupils are punctual, enabling lessons to start on time.

The attainment of most children entering the Nursery is below average especially in social and language development. The good quality of provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that all children make good progress, achieving their targets by the end of Reception. Pupils continue to achieve well so that by Year 4, standards are typically above average. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress as they are provided with challenging work and the additional support they need to keep up with other pupils. Overall, pupils attain much higher standards in reading than other areas because of the emphasis given to this from the moment that they enter school. Those with a special gift or talent are well provided for and achieve their potential.

The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. In the Foundation Stage, children benefit from the very favourable adult to children ratio and make exceptional progress in their social and emotional development as well as their communication skills. There is a purposeful atmosphere for learning throughout the school. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils' learning, especially for those who find learning difficult. Staff plan lessons well: they take account of the different learning needs of their pupils and carefully monitor the progress they make. Good use is made of computers and the latest display technology. The curriculum is outstanding because of the way it is tailored to meet individual needs. It is enhanced by lessons in French and a good range of activities for pupils to enjoy outside normal school hours. As a result pupils of all ages and abilities are successfully motivated and challenged by the interesting tasks that they are given to do. Arrangements for assessment provide a

wealth of information on the standards being achieved and this enables children's progress to be carefully tracked term by term. Parents and children know what targets have been set and these are closely monitored and evaluated by pupils and their teachers.

Leadership and management are good. Staff work effectively in teams to tackle identified priorities for improvement but there are too many such priorities in the current improvement plan. As a result, staff are not able to give each one the attention it deserves. All regularly monitor the quality of teaching and learning and other aspects of school life. The governing body benefits from the leadership of a knowledgeable chair of governors. All regularly attend training sessions and are committed to helping the school to monitor its effectiveness. This is at times difficult, however, because of the lack of specific criteria by which to measure the success of identified priorities. Improving the quality of the temporary accommodation is a major challenge for the school, especially for Year 4 pupils where the classroom is very cramped, limiting learning experiences. Overall, the school has good capacity to further improve.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- In school improvement planning, identify fewer priorities and include more specific information about how success in improving outcomes for pupils is to be measured.
- Ensure that the temporary accommodation, especially for Year 4, meets acceptable standards of quality and repair in order that pupils have good conditions for learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage due to the good quality of teaching which ensures continuity in learning from the Nursery to Reception. Most achieve their early learning targets by the end of their Reception year.

By Year 2 pupils' good progress has been maintained and overall standards are above average in writing and mathematics. Standards in reading, however, are well above average with many attaining highly. This success reflects the emphasis the school has given to improving reading. Writing is the current focus and standards have been significantly improved over the previous year. By Year 4 detailed tracking data shows that pupils continue to do well, attaining above average standards in English, mathematics and science. The high standards in reading are maintained. All pupils are on course to meet their challenging targets. The school has employed a range of initiatives to ensure that boys achieve their true potential and there is no significant difference in the attainment of girls and boys. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress because of the well organised and high quality support that they receive.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Very high standards of behaviour are expected and achieved resulting in a safe, happy school free from bullying. 'We are a polite school.' This comment from one pupil reflects the pride most have for their school. Parents appreciate the strong Christian and social values that the school promotes through the St Mary's code, which expects pupils to be considerate, careful, caring and courteous. Attendance is average following successful school initiatives to eliminate unauthorised absence.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school celebrates every achievement, no matter how small, to successfully raise self-esteem and to motivate children to do their best in everything. Cultural development has a high profile and religious festivals are treated as special occasions to be enjoyed in school or in church.

Pupils have a very good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and exercise. Community links are particularly strong and pupils are often involved in activities such as raising money for charities or with planting bulbs locally. In the Nursery and Reception children do especially well in their personal, social and emotional development because of the very favourable adult to child ratio, giving children the close attention that they need, when they need it.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The consistently good and on occasions outstanding quality of teaching and learning ensures that all pupils achieve well. Staff have excellent relationships with pupils. Pupils say that, 'teachers are nice: they help you to learn and give you stickers and treasures that make you more confident'. The management of pupils' behaviour is a great strength, ensuring that pupils always work hard and develop positive attitudes towards learning. Lesson planning is very clear and ensures that all pupils are challenged. It is particularly effective in helping staff to anticipate any misconceptions and difficulties pupils may have so that the pace of learning does not slow. Care is taken to challenge higher attaining pupils and to support lower attainers. On a few occasions, however, pupils of average ability are set tasks which are not sufficiently challenging for them. Teachers carefully mark work and pupils are very pleased that they are also encouraged to assess their own work. Assessment information is used well by staff to set lesson objectives and identify any pupils who may need additional help or support. Teaching assistants do a marvellous job of supporting any pupil who is experiencing difficulty for whatever reason.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils superbly well and as a result, pupils' personal development is outstanding. Previous weaknesses in information and communication technology have been thoroughly addressed and the use of computers to support learning and enhance the curriculum is a strong feature in most lessons. Pupils' writing is improving because of the school's extra efforts to inspire them through role-play and to be adventurous in their writing. Specialist teachers, sports coaches, a good range of extra-curricular activities such as gym and gardening clubs and many educational visits and visitors add breadth to pupils' learning. Health and safety is very well promoted. The curriculum successfully raises pupils' awareness about diversity in our multi-cultural society with additional experiences such as learning to speak French and through visits and links with contrasting schools.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides outstanding care, advice and support within a very strong family atmosphere. Typical comments from pupils include, 'I really don't want to leave this school, it's brilliant, everyone makes you feel happy and when you're stuck with your work they help you.' Personal development is monitored and promoted particularly well from the Nursery to Year 4. The use of praise and rewards leads to excellent attitudes and behaviour. Academic support and guidance is outstanding. Personalised learning sessions are available for those who may be underachieving in a particular subject or skill and ABC (awareness, balance and coordination) sessions are thoroughly enjoyed and are helping to improve skills such as neat handwriting and counting. Pupils with a particular talent are identified and benefit from special lessons that challenge them and really make them think. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given excellent support by teaching assistants and this helps them to make very good progress. Procedures to ensure health and safety, including child protection, are in place and reviewed regularly.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher knows the school well and works tirelessly towards raising standards and the quality of education. Strong teamwork is evident with all staff having clearly defined roles and responsibilities. Arrangements for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for children in the Foundation Stage are especially well managed. This results in their good achievement. All staff effectively contribute to school improvement planning, although there are too many priorities and the criteria to judge how effectively each one is addressed are not specific enough. Resources, including the accommodation, are generally good but the temporary classrooms are badly in need of repair to make doors and windows open more easily. In Year 4, in particular,

the accommodation is very cramped for 31 pupils. Excellent links with the local church, community and parents have been established resulting in strong support for the school. Highly effective procedures for evaluating standards and any underachievement have effectively helped to raise standards. Most staff are regularly involved in carefully monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in order to further raise standards.

The governing body fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. A particular strength is the expertise of the chair of governors in ensuring the governing body is fully involved in monitoring the school's effectiveness. As a result the capacity of the school to improve is good.



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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you all, looking around your classrooms and joining you for assembly. We can see why you enjoy the assemblies with Father John so much. The other things that we thought were particularly good, as well as your fantastic school dinners, were:

- how hard your headteacher and all the staff are working to make sure that your lessons are really interesting and guaranteed to make you want to learn
- how brilliantly well you behave in class and around school. You are very polite indeed
- the good start that you all have in the Nursery and Reception classes with lots of interesting things to do like painting rainbows or using computers
- with how well you are cared for and supported by your teachers, their helpers and all the lunchtime staff. We think that the buddies do a great job at playtimes
- the way your parents and the school staff get on so well together.

We are asking your headteacher and staff to concentrate improving a fewer number of things so that they can spend more time on each and to try and repair the outdoor classrooms so that you can open the doors and windows more easily.

Thank you again for helping us during the inspection. We think that you are lucky to have such a good school with lots of interesting and exciting things to do. Your Chinese dragon with shiny scales was most impressive! Finally, a special thank you to Reception children for the delicious shortbread biscuits with the pink bit on top. We hope that you will carry on enjoying all that the school has to offer and be just as polite when you are older.