

# Gobowen Primary School

## Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 123366         |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Shropshire     |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 292641         |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>        | 15–16 May 2007 |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | John Eadie     |

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 category</b>                    | Community                       |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                | 4–11                            |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                   | Mixed                           |
| <b>Number on roll</b>                     |                                 |
| School                                    | 184                             |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>              | The governing body              |
| <b>Chair</b>                              | Tim Rogers                      |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                        | Steve Conroy                    |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b> | 20 May 2002                     |
| <b>School address</b>                     | Gobowen<br>Oswestry<br>SY11 3LD |
| <b>Telephone number</b>                   | 01691 661343                    |
| <b>Fax number</b>                         | 01691 679042                    |

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|--------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 4–11           |
| <b>Inspection dates</b>  | 15–16 May 2007 |
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This average size school serves the village of Gobowen and surrounding communities. The very large majority of pupils are White British, with the remainder representing a wide variety of other heritages. All speak English at home. There are some areas of deprivation in the village, reflected in the higher than average proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. There are more pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities than one would normally find in a school of this size. There have been some extended periods of staff absence due to illness, particularly amongst senior managers.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. Pupils' progress is satisfactory, though it is improving. For example, the school has worked hard to raise standards of writing and this has been successful, with pupils making much better progress in this aspect of English. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they are reaching broadly average standards by the time they leave the school. However, progress is hindered for many pupils as they do not have sufficient vocabulary to reason or discuss what they are learning. Children in the Reception class make satisfactory progress as the provision for them is sound. This was an issue in the previous inspection and improvements have been made, particularly in the classroom and outdoor area. However, children are not given sufficient opportunities to choose their own learning activities or develop their speaking skills by working in pairs and small groups.

The main reason why pupils only make satisfactory progress, is that teaching and learning could be better. The school provides some outstanding extra classes for gifted and talented pupils. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities have good plans made to help them progress and effective use is made of outside experts to guide staff in this process. However, in lessons teachers do not always provide a sufficiently wide range of work to suit the different abilities in their classes and the needs of these different groups are not effectively met. The curriculum is satisfactory but has not been adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of the range of pupils' abilities. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well by teachers to help pupils learn better in other subjects.

Pupils say they really enjoy school and this is evident in their enthusiasm for the activities and clubs. This is appreciated by parents, many of whom describe it as a happy school. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory, but they are not developing sufficient self-help strategies or independent learning skills. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Pastoral care is good and all adults take good care of pupils, but opportunities for them to take responsibility, and thereby improve their personal development, are restricted. Academic support and guidance is not as strong. Although there are good systems for checking on pupils' progress each term and year, this has not resulted in clear targets being set for pupils' next steps in learning. This also means that teachers' marking cannot be linked to these targets to help pupils improve their work.

There is a team spirit evident among all staff and governors and a commitment to take the school forward. Much has been achieved in recent years in addition to the improvement in pupils' writing. There are plentiful resources for ICT and much has been done to make the school a brighter and more pleasant place in which to learn and work. However, there are still key areas to address, such as using assessment information to help pupils progress faster. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Bearing in mind the progress currently being made and advances since the previous inspection, the school is in a satisfactory position to continue to move forward.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Put in place a structured programme to develop pupils' speaking skills so that they have sufficient vocabulary to enable them to make better progress in all subjects.
- Set clear targets for pupils, and involve them in the process, so that they and their teachers know exactly what they need to learn next and teachers can then mark to these targets.

- Ensure that in all lessons, teachers provide work of a range of difficulty so that pupils of all ability levels can make better progress. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children start in the Reception class with levels of skills and knowledge a little below those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress and, by the time they start in Year 1, they have almost reached expected levels. However, their speaking skills remain weak, as developing these skills is not a sufficient focus in the Reception class. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they make steady progress through the school. By the time pupils leave, they have reached broadly average standards. However, standards in science are better than those in English and mathematics and pupils make better progress in this subject. This is because the subject is taught using an experimental approach, which pupils enjoy. Standards in English are relatively weaker as pupils are not developing their speaking skills and vocabulary sufficiently to be able to reason and discuss their work. In mathematics, this lack of vocabulary means that pupils have difficulty coping with problems that are set out in words.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour both around the school and in lessons is satisfactory. In the playground, pupils play safely and happily together most of the time. However, when there are disagreements, they rely on adults to sort these out and have limited strategies of their own to resolve problems. During lessons, teachers often tell pupils exactly what to do and this limits opportunities for pupils to think about the best way to organise their own learning.

Most pupils, especially the older ones, are increasingly aware of the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle, though this is not always carried through to choosing healthy snacks. They are very keen to take part in sport and both boys and girls talk enthusiastically about their involvement in tag rugby and football. Members of the school council are beginning to make a positive contribution to the life of the school.

The choir and other music groups perform locally. Year 6 pupils organise fund-raising events to support their end of year trip, which contributes to satisfactory preparation for their future. Pupils learn about different religious faiths and musical traditions across the world but are not sufficiently prepared for life in our multi-cultural society.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

There are good relationships between pupils and all adults and this leads to pupils working hard and wanting to do well. Teachers have created a calm, orderly environment and this allows pupils to concentrate well. A particular strength is teachers' use of the interactive whiteboards, which increases pupils' involvement and enjoyment. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution, particularly in enabling pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to make

the same progress in lessons as their classmates. However, work is not often planned specifically for these pupils in lessons. Although there are excellent extra sessions for the most able, suitable work is rarely planned to challenge them in lessons.

Teachers' marking is encouraging and a good start has been made at enabling pupils to evaluate the effectiveness of their own learning in some classes. However, marking does not always show pupils how they can improve their work. There are times, particularly in Reception and Years 1 and 2, when teachers give too much guidance, leaving little opportunity for pupils to develop their own learning styles. There are also opportunities missed for pupils to develop their speaking skills, by being encouraged to discuss in pairs or small groups, or being expected to give extended answers.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

There are good opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning, which they enjoy. However, there are limited opportunities for them to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. Outside the classroom there is good provision for the differing needs of the most able pupils and those with learning difficulties and disabilities through well-planned support programmes and exciting challenges. In lessons, however, pupils are frequently all given the same tasks to do which are too easy for some but too difficult for others and, as a result, their progress is limited. The curriculum for the Reception class is planned to cover all areas of learning but there is often too narrow a variety of activities to develop a range of skills, particularly their speaking. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of popular after-school sports and clubs. There is a thriving school choir and many pupils learn to play musical instruments.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Pupils say they feel safe in school and they know who they can go to if they are worried. The school has secure arrangements in place for child protection and effective working links with other agencies that support pupils and their families. Pupils' progress is checked regularly but this information is not used effectively to set targets for improvement. Whilst there are group targets on display in classes, not all pupils are clear about these and they are not specific enough to help them improve their work.

Teachers, teaching assistants and other adults provide good pastoral care for pupils. Those who offer support to pupils who experience social and emotional problems do a particularly good job and enable these pupils to play a full part in school life.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Some periods of extended sickness leave for members of the senior management team have hampered the school's progress. However, there is a shared vision for the future and the whole staff are fully committed to taking the school forward. There are thorough procedures in place for managers to check on the effectiveness of teaching, though the criteria used are not sufficiently linked to the success of pupils' learning. Some weaknesses have been identified correctly and successfully addressed, for example, the quality of pupils' writing.

Governors are very supportive and visit regularly. However, they have not yet developed systems for checking on the effectiveness of the school for themselves. They have not been sufficiently involved in the process of the evaluation of the effectiveness of the school. The school is carrying forward a higher-than-usual budget surplus, but this has not affected key aspects of provision, which are good. For example, the school has a large number of laptop computers, which are used well to support pupils' learning. The surplus is planned carefully for future developments.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

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

### 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> | 3   |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?  | 2   |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage  | 3   |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation  | 3   |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements  | 3   |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection   | Yes |

### Achievement and standards

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How well do learners achieve?</b>   | 3 |
| The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners   | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 3 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress                              | 3 |

### Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                           | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development                                     | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners   | 3 |
| The attendance of learners  | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education   | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices   | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles   | 3 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community                                    | 3 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 3 |

### The quality of provision

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>          | 3 |
| <b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b> | 3 |
| <b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>   | 3 |

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 3   |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3   |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets   | 3   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can                     | 3   |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money  | 3   |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities  | 3   |
| 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

17 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gobowen Primary School, Oswestry, Shropshire SY11 3LD

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school this week. Mrs Edwards and I enjoyed meeting you, seeing how hard you are working and hearing how much you enjoy school. Your school is giving you a satisfactory education.

The main things we found about your school are:

- You obviously enjoy school and work hard but you need more opportunities to find things out for yourselves or sort out your own problems.
- You are making satisfactory progress as teaching is satisfactory and the standard of your work is broadly average.
- All adults take good care of you but they do not always make it clear enough how you can improve your work.
- Your lessons cover the usual topics and there are lots of occasions when you can use computers to help you learn, but you are not given enough opportunities to practise your English and mathematics skills in other subjects.
- Your headteacher and the staff are working hard to make the school better.

We have suggested that the following things should be improved:

- Some of you find it difficult to explain and discuss your work and we think the school needs to help you to do this.
- You are not always told clearly enough how you can improve your work.
- In some lessons you all have to do the same work and some of you find this too easy, while others find it too difficult.

With best wishes for the future. Keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

John D Eadie Lead inspector