

# Gorsemoor Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124183
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	292915
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Gulshanbir Kayembe

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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	495
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ian Carr
<b>Headteacher</b>	P J Bennett
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 December 2002
<b>School address</b>	Gorsemoor Road Heath Hayes Cannock WS12 3TG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01543 274788
<b>Fax number</b>	01543 278623

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school serves a relatively new estate, which is still growing, in Cannock. Hence the school roll also continues to grow. As the estate has expanded, there has been a change in the intake, resulting in pupils starting school with better attainment than at the time of the last inspection. Attainment on entry is broadly average, although the current Year 3 started at above-average levels, while Year 6 had below-average skills and knowledge when they started. The vast majority of pupils are White British. Of the handful of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, only one or two have English as an additional language, though all are fluent English speakers. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. The proportion with a statement of special educational need is broadly average.

## 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. It provides a good quality education for its pupils. As a result, pupils achieve well and reach above-average standards by the end of Year 6. Standards in English are exceptionally high because there has been a sustained focus on developing pupils' writing over the last two years. Whilst standards in mathematics and science are above average, the school is now turning its attention to raising these even more by developing pupils' problem-solving and investigative skills. These have yet to be fully embedded across the school. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage is good and pupils get a good start to their education. They develop good early reading and writing skills so that they are well prepared for Key Stage 1.

Leadership and management are good. The success of the school is down to the good leadership provided by the headteacher and good teamwork amongst staff, who are all working towards the same key aim of supporting pupils to do their best and to achieve as well as they can. The quality of teaching is good and promotes a strong work ethic amongst pupils. An outstanding feature is the quality of pupils' responses to learning in lessons. They listen intently and focus very well on their work. A good quality curriculum supports teaching and learning and contributes well to pupils' good personal development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good and their behaviour is exemplary.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle, although they do not always make the healthiest choice when it comes to snacks. They contribute very well to the school community. Whilst pupils enjoy school immensely, a minority of parents take their children on holiday during term time, and this prevents the school from achieving better than satisfactory attendance. The good level of care, guidance and support that pupils receive enables them to feel safe and well cared for. The support for academic guidance is less well developed. Pupils are not always given targets and advice in written comments in their books which helps them to understand exactly what they have to do to improve their work. Nonetheless, the very positive ethos within the school enables them to develop lasting personal qualities which will sustain them well in their future lives. These, together with the good progress pupils make in literacy and numeracy, ensure that they are well prepared for the next step in education.

The school makes good use of the information gathered from checks made on the quality of its work to identify how well it is doing and what areas need to be improved. It has made good progress since the last inspection and, given the good level of accuracy of its self-evaluation, the commitment of staff to providing a high quality education and the effective structures in place to manage its work, the school has good capacity to improve. Governors exercise good oversight of the school's work. Resources are well used and the headteacher shows excellent entrepreneurial skills when it comes to finding funds for improving accommodation and keeping the school well resourced. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' skills in solving problems and investigation work.
- Ensure that marking and targets provided for pupils consistently give them clear information about how to improve their work.
- Work proactively with parents to reduce the number of pupils taking holidays during term time.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards are above average at the end of the Foundation Stage. They are above average at the end of Year 2 and more comfortably above average by Year 6. Standards in English are better in both key stages than in mathematics and science. They show a good trend of improvement, especially in science by Year 6 and in mathematics by Year 2. Pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2006 were exceptionally high in English and above average in mathematics and science. A large proportion of pupils reached the higher level in English and science, reflecting the good provision for able pupils within the school. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are strong across the school. Their problem-solving and investigative skills are not quite as good. For example, pupils do not always explain their findings effectively enough in scientific terms and sometimes struggle with written problems in mathematics.

Achievement is good overall. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well, especially those with a statement and those receiving additional support. The small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make good progress. Those who arrived at the school with hardly any English have acquired it at a rapid rate.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school. Behaviour is outstanding, enabling pupils to achieve well and work conscientiously. Attendance is satisfactory but is affected by the number of pupils taking family holidays in term time. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good overall. They develop good social skills through working cooperatively, residential experiences and linking with schools in Belfast and Dublin. They have an outstanding understanding of right and wrong. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Much is done to raise pupils' understanding of other cultures throughout the world, but they have limited understanding of the multi-ethnic mix found in the school's wider locality.

Pupils know how to stay safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. Their overall contribution to the community is good. They visit the church and residential home and contribute generously to charities. Through their involvement with school council and additional responsibilities, pupils learn the importance of taking responsibility and providing leadership to others. Pupils' good progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) means that they are well prepared for their future education. Personal and social development of pupils in the Foundation Stage is good, ensuring their readiness for Year 1.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

The pupils' good progress and their enjoyment in learning are the result of good teaching. Teachers make very good use of the interactive whiteboards to make presentations and to show pupils what they are going to learn and why. Excellent relationships underpin the teaching and learning, giving pupils very positive attitudes. Teachers monitor the achievements of pupils carefully and use the information well to plan the next steps in learning. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good.

In some lessons the teaching is outstanding, but in others the pace decreases occasionally and pupils do not work as hard as they could. There are times when teachers give too much direction to pupils and this does not allow them to take learning into their own hands. Younger pupils sometimes spend too much time sitting listening on the carpet and this prevents them from becoming sufficiently involved in their learning.

Positive written comments in the pupils' books encourage them but do not always provide enough guidance on how they can improve their work. Teaching assistants play an important role in helping pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to achieve as well as their classmates. They also help to extend able pupils.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The school's curriculum is good. Effective steps taken to add structure and creativity to the literacy curriculum have resulted in rapidly improving standards in pupils' writing. There have been outstanding developments in the provision for ICT. For example, it was the first school in the Local Authority to achieve the ICT Mark and is piloting an innovative interactive home-school learning programme which involves parents. The school is beginning to develop links between subjects and more opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and independence, and is aware that such developments have further to go. The curriculum is carefully planned to address the needs of differing academic abilities, enabling all groups to achieve well. Effective steps to address boys' past underachievement have been successful. The Foundation Stage curriculum is also good and places strong emphasis on learning good work habits, enabling children to achieve well. The school has plans to redevelop the outdoor areas in order to provide a more stimulating environment for Foundation Stage pupils.

A wide range of interesting visits and visitors and a good range of clubs enrich the curriculum and support pupils' personal development well. The Activemark Gold award for sporting provision and being an FA Charter school give excellent opportunities for pupils to be physically active. There is a good programme of personal and social development in place.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school takes good care of its pupils. Systems for safeguarding children are good. Children feel safe and able to share problems with adults. Relationships are strong, resulting in friendly, harmonious classrooms. Other professionals are used effectively to enhance provision; for example, the community constable visits to discuss 'Stranger Danger'. Children in the Nursery make a good start as a result of effective arrangements for settling them in. They are taught clear boundaries for behaviour. Those with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support and achieve in line with their peers.

Pupils' personal targets have been introduced to help them improve their work, but these are sometimes too broad and do not always closely match their next stage of learning.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The good quality of leadership and management is the main reason why this is a good school that has a number of outstanding features and a good capacity to improve. The experienced headteacher has been successful in developing a school where all children have the opportunity to thrive.

Staff work well together, notably through the relatively new curriculum teams in which outstanding staff involvement is beginning to have a strong impact on the life of the school. This is one of the ways in which staff development is outstanding. Good monitoring and evaluation mean that the school knows itself well, with a clear commitment to improving pupils' already high standards. A good example of this drive for improvement is the way the school rigorously tackled a comparative weakness in writing, leading to a significant rise in standards.

Governance is good overall. Governors are supportive and many, but not all, take an active role in being closely involved in the life of the school, enhancing their knowledge of its performance. The school has very strong links with parents and consults regularly with them, and with pupils. Their views are taken into account well when making decisions. Overall, parents think very highly of the school.

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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>
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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?	2
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>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### 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>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	2

<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>	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

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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

We very much enjoyed visiting your school and, most of all, enjoyed talking to you. We would like to thank you very much for making us welcome. In particular, we were impressed with how mature and responsible you were. We are pleased to say the school provides you with a good quality education.

We saw a number of things that were good, including ways in which you help to make the school a better place:

- You work hard in lessons and make good progress.
- Your behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary.
- You take your responsibilities around the school very seriously and make a strong contribution to your school community.
- Teaching is good and you enjoy excellent relationships with staff.
- The school provides you with excellent opportunities for developing your ICT skills.
- The school is well led and managed and the headteacher and staff work hard to get the best results for you.

There are some things that could be better. These are:

- Ensuring that you develop good problem-solving skills in mathematics and investigation skills in science.
- Providing you with targets and written comments that tell you clearly and precisely what you need to do to improve your work.
- Making sure that you attend regularly, including not having holidays during term time.

You can certainly help the school to improve by working on your problem-solving skills and by trying to think more like real scientists.