

Gorsefield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105312
Local Authority	Bury
Inspection number	308828
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Jim Kidd

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	433
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Tonge
Headteacher	Mr C Blomerley
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2004
School address	Robertson Street Radcliffe Manchester M26 4DW
Telephone number	0161 725 9750
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average school serves a mixed area, but one in which there is some considerable social and economic disadvantage. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is almost twice the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average and the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational need is more than three times that usually found. Most pupils are of White British heritage but there is a significant number from minority ethnic backgrounds, many of whom speak English as an additional language. The school contains a resourced unit for pupils who have moderate or severe learning difficulties. Gorsefield holds a prestigious Inclusion Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark. It also has Healthy School status and Activemark and received the Bury School Sporting Award in 2007.

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 and inclusive school in which pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils have the highest regard for their school and comment, 'We enjoy Gorsefield because everyone helps each other here.' Parents agree and add, 'We are well informed about our children's progress and the staff are welcoming and professional.'

Pupils show a real pride in their school, take responsibility for looking after younger children and work hard to make sure that everyone can benefit from all aspects of school life. Teachers and teaching assistants provide the high levels of care and support and they are impressive role models for their pupils. As a result, pupils are motivated to do well, make good progress in their academic work and achieve outstandingly well in their personal, social and emotional development. Inclusion is a byword in school and pupils of all abilities work well together and take full advantage of the excellent range of enrichment activities, such as the brass ensemble.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills which are well below those usually found at this age. Good and sometimes outstanding teaching leads to them achieving well in all key stages. Standards are below average at the end of Year 6, but are rising. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive sensitive support from teachers and teaching assistants, make the same progress as their peers as a result and often surprise themselves at what they can do. The school does very well with the large numbers of pupils who join the school during the academic year and this sometimes has an adverse effect on standards. The curriculum is good and there is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Pupils' work is marked regularly but their targets are not always sharp enough for them to be fully aware of how they can take the next step to improve their standards.

Relationships are a major strength of the school and from the moment pupils enter in the morning to when they leave in the afternoon, smiling, courtesy to all and excellent behaviour are the order of the day. Pupils have a keen awareness of the importance of living a healthy lifestyle and are also grateful for the many sporting activities in which they can take part. The school has an enviable record in cricket and there are two and sometimes three teams in each sport on offer. Pupils benefit from outstanding links with other schools and organisations and support charities at local, national and global levels. They have a very good understanding of Britain as a multicultural society.

The school is led and managed very well by the headteacher and deputy headteacher who have a clear vision for improvement. This is shared by all staff who are fully committed to the personal and academic well-being of the pupils in their care. Middle leaders promote teamwork in their areas well, but their skills of monitoring and evaluating performance are not developed enough for them to have a greater influence on improving standards.

The strengths in leadership and management, pupils' excellent personal development and the high levels of pastoral support provided for them indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further and that it provides good value for money. As parents say, 'We know just what an inclusive, child-centred and effective school Gorsefield is.'

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children get a very effective start to their school careers in the outstanding Nursery. Effective arrangements for admission, home visits and high

quality information ensure that children make a smooth transition into their new surroundings. Organisation of the curriculum is good and there is a clear focus on the early learning goals. As in the main school, inclusion is a strength and there is very good support for children with learning difficulties. Children behave very well indeed, play happily together and are eager to learn.

Children make good progress because teachers have produced clearly identified targets to foster speaking and listening and there is an appropriate emphasis on developing personal, social and emotional skills. Teaching is good and, on occasions, outstanding in the Nursery. Teachers are currently developing sharper assessments so as to meet the needs of children even more closely. Leadership and management are effective and teachers and teaching assistants work well together for the benefit of their children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that academic guidance and target setting are sharp enough to enable all pupils to be fully aware of their learning intentions.
- Develop the monitoring and evaluation skills of middle leaders in order that they may play a more effective role in school development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

From well below average skills when they enter the Nursery, pupils make good progress across the school and reach below average standards by the time they leave for the secondary school at the end of Year 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils build successfully on the good start in the Foundation Stage and standards in reading and mathematics have risen significantly in recent years. In 2007, a particularly large percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and an above average number of pupils joining and leaving the school affected standards adversely in Key Stage 2. The situation has now improved, partly as a result of a recent focus on developing pupils' confidence in writing, speaking and listening and also on their problem-solving skills in mathematics. Inspection evidence demonstrates that pupils in the current Years 3 to 6 are achieving well and that standards are rising rapidly.

The very effective use of teaching assistants results in those pupils who often find the work difficult making the same good progress as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

As pupils say, 'We really enjoy school because we can learn from each other and because our teachers are kind and helpful.' Indeed, pupils love their school, feel safe in it and demonstrate excellent attitudes towards each other and towards their learning. They have a keen sense of right and wrong and willingly carry out a wide range of duties, which enable them to make an outstanding contribution to the life of the school and to the local and wider communities. For example, the school council represents the views of its constituents with skill and verve and playground buddies ensure that younger pupils are looked after at breaks and lunchtimes. Sport and keeping fit are important elements of school life and pupils also have a good understanding of the importance of eating healthily.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding and pupils have an excellent awareness of cultures and religions different from their own. They show an increasing

maturity as they move through the school, gain in confidence to lead assemblies and are polite and courteous to visitors. The attendance of the vast majority of pupils is good, as a result of the school's very effective strategies to promote it. Pupils' sound basic skills, together with their outstanding personal and social development, mean that they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Appropriate levels of challenge, many opportunities for pupils to support the learning of their classmates and activities designed to engage pupils of all abilities are the key features of the good teaching throughout the school. During the inspection, outstanding teaching was seen in all key stages and pupils were motivated and keen to learn as a consequence. In an excellent Year 6 literacy lesson, for example, challenging questions from the teacher ensured that the more able pupils gave convincing and balanced arguments about the morality of keeping animals in a zoo. Similarly, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in Year 5 thrived on the expectations of their teacher and teaching assistants to produce a significant number of complex adjectives in relation to emotions. In all lessons, pupils challenge and support each other and are delighted when their classmates succeed!

In a minority of lessons, pace is slow and activities do not motivate pupils to aim for higher standards. Marking is regular but inconsistent in quality. It varies from detailed advice on how pupils can improve their work to little more than cursory comment which does not refer to pupils' targets. The school recognises this and is addressing it.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The quality of the curriculum is good. The school is concerned to foster pupils' self-esteem and provides a good range of opportunities for them to gain in confidence, the resourced base and small-group sessions, for example. These enhance their social skills and contribute well to their mature attitudes to learning. There is appropriate emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science but pupils do not consistently get enough opportunities to practise their skills in literacy and numeracy across other areas of the curriculum.

There is an outstanding range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities and pupils speak highly of the sports events, clubs, visits and visitors. The exciting and motivating variety of activities has a major impact on pupils' impressive personal development and on their high levels of enjoyment of school life. The vibrant display in classrooms and on corridors is used as a resource for pupils' learning and also shows the immense pride pupils take in their work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

One parent spoke for many when she said, 'The school puts the welfare of its pupils first. Every adult is approachable and the school has an open door for any concerns.' Indeed, the pastoral care for pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those identified as vulnerable, is excellent. Information and support to ease the entry for children starting Nursery and to ensure that those leaving for the secondary school make a good start

in their new surroundings are comprehensive and very effective. The talented and hardworking team of support assistants is much appreciated by pupils and their families and demonstrates just how much each individual is valued by the school. Child protection procedures and procedures to ensure pupils' health and safety are very well established and meet current guidelines.

The quality and extent of academic guidance is inconsistent across the school. Some pupils, particularly those with additional needs, are fully aware of their next steps in learning. However, targets are not always focused sharply enough to enable all pupils to be fully aware of what they need to do to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The inspirational and dynamic leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher motivates pupils and staff to aim for the highest standards in everything they do. The senior management team leads by example and, as a result, morale in the school is high. Governors are well informed, fully supportive of what the school is trying to do and they hold the leadership to account with increasing rigour. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school.

The school's outstanding pastoral care for its pupils is rooted in its overriding concern: to promote the personal, emotional and academic development of each pupil and thus ensure that all can take full advantage of what the school offers them.

The quality of the school's self-evaluation is good and identifies priorities for improvement with accuracy. Leaders are not complacent, set challenging targets for pupils and staff and are generally effective in reaching them.

Middle leaders are totally committed to an ongoing improvement in standards and achievement and demonstrate high levels of teamwork in all areas. For example, staff new to the school pay testament to the support and advice they receive from more experienced teachers. The school recognises, however, that the monitoring and evaluation skills of middle leaders are not sharply enough developed for them to play a more significant role in whole-school improvement and the raising of standards.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

Inspection of Gorsefield Primary School, Manchester, M26 4DW

Thank you all so much for the wonderful welcome you gave to Mrs Ward, Mr Markham and myself when we visited your school recently. You were very polite and friendly to us and it was a pleasure to talk to you. I would now like to tell you what we think about your school.

Gorsefield is a good school and you are right to be very proud of it. Your parents and all the adults who work with you in school are proud of it too! Your behaviour is excellent and you do a lot to support your classmates and also to help younger children. The school council, playground buddies and road safety officers do a particularly good job. Your teachers teach you well and you make good progress in your lessons. You also really enjoy the outstanding range of activities you can take part in at lunchtime and after school. You have more sports teams than many schools and the girls' football team has done very well recently. You know how to keep fit and you have a good understanding of how to eat healthily. You have a very good and very well deserved reputation for supporting a wide range of charities.

Your teachers and teaching assistants take very good care of you indeed and are always there for you when you need help. We have asked your teachers to give you more advice on how well you are doing so that you know exactly what is needed to make your work even better. The assemblies you have show just how much your school values every single one of you and you receive praise and awards for working hard and trying your best in everything you do.

Your headteacher, deputy headteacher and all the other staff work hard to make sure that Gorsefield is a happy school and they know how to make it even better. We have asked them to make sure that your teachers look even more closely at how you are achieving in all the subjects for which they are responsible so as to make your school even better! You can play your part too by continuing to work as hard as you can.