

Gorse Ride Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109924
Local Authority	Wokingham Borough Council
Inspection number	310143
Inspection date	11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Anthony Green

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sandra Sidey
Headteacher	Miss Eileen Rogers
Date of previous school inspection	12 October 2004
School address	Gorse Ride South Finchampstead Wokingham RG40 4EH
Telephone number	01189 734880
Fax number	01189 736300

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following areas:

- pupils' achievement, especially for the more able in writing and science
- the quality of teaching and learning, particularly for English, science and information and communication technology (ICT)
- the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being
- the provision for the Foundation Stage.

In addition, evidence was gathered from lesson observations, examination of pupils' work, school documentation, parents' responses to questionnaires and discussions with pupils, governors and staff. Other aspects of the school were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is an average sized school. The great majority of pupils have White British heritage and few are at an early stage of learning to speak English. A small proportion are from traveller families. The proportion of pupils who require extra support with their lessons are similar to those found in most other schools, although it can be higher in some year groups than others. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The school has gained the Activemark, Healthy Schools Award and Investor in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Gorse Ride provides a good education for its pupils. It is well thought of by parents and carers, the vast majority of whom are extremely pleased with the school and have a high regard for the headteacher and staff. As one commented, 'Our daughter is very happy at school. She is challenged in her learning. She is really known as an individual and is treated as such. The staff, from caretaker to teachers, are genuinely interested. We really feel that the school has done that little bit more for her.'

This is an extremely caring school. Very high and successful regard is paid to pupils' personal development and well-being. The good start children make in the Nursery and Reception classes is built on in Years 1 and 2. The outstanding care, guidance and support draws on the outstanding links with parents and outside agencies. Pupils feel extremely safe and happy. As a result, their behaviour is excellent and relationships are excellent. Pupils very much enjoy school. Attendance rates, however, are broadly average. Despite the very best efforts of the school a handful of pupils are persistently absent more than they should be. The school is working hard with this group of pupils to ensure that they attend regularly. All required safeguarding procedures are in place.

Standards on entry are below average, especially in language and literacy. Pupils make good progress throughout the school because of the good quality of teaching, underpinned by a very exciting and interesting curriculum. This is reflected in the above average standards reached by Year 2 in reading, mathematics and science. Standards in writing have been stubbornly average over a number of years. The school has rightly recognised that these standards need to be raised, especially at the higher level. In response, there are now more planned opportunities for writing across the curriculum. A very good example was observed in Year 2, where pupils' writing was closely linked to their science. Planned opportunities are now in place for pupils to develop their writing further from first-hand experiences, such as role-play.

Teachers assess pupils' progress very well and make very good use of this information when planning future activities. They ensure that work is challenging, enjoyable and very well matched to the needs of all groups of pupils. This includes those who need more support with their work, gifted and talented pupils, and those with behaviour and/or concentration difficulties. Some pupils in Year 2 are very involved in the assessment of their own work. They really enjoy marking their own work using 'tickled pink', to show they have succeeded, or 'green for growth', to show they need more help and support, and to set their own targets for improvement. However, this excellent use of self-assessment is not yet fully embedded in all Year 1 and Year 2 classes.

Well-informed teaching assistants make a very strong contribution to the high quality of learning, especially when working with individuals or set groups for English and mathematics. As a result, the achievement of all groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language, is good. Pupils are well prepared for their transition from the Foundation Stage to Years 1 and 2. The very good links with the neighbouring junior school also ensure a smooth transition to Year 3. This is further enhanced by the very capable manager for pupils with special needs, who works in the infant and junior school and so ensures continuity of support for the pupils and continuing close liaison with parents, carers and outside agencies.

ICT is planned for very well and supports teaching and learning across a wide range of subjects. Interactive white boards in all classes add stimulus and interest to lessons, and are used with

confidence by teachers and pupils. In a Reception class lesson, pupils were observed confidently using the interactive white board to draw a picture of a fireman, following a visit by a fire officer. Not only did this help develop pupils' ICT skills but, through very careful questioning by the teacher, developed pupils' speaking and listening skills and their understanding of the role of the fire service.

The outstanding curriculum underpins good teaching and contributes to pupils' good levels of achievement and excellent enjoyment. It is very well adapted to meet the needs of all pupils. Themed days and weeks ensure the curriculum has meaning and relevance to pupils and, as many parents and pupils commented, makes learning 'fun'. The curriculum is also enriched by an excellent range of activities, including visits and visitors, and a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including sports, French, cookery and art. This is also seen as a strength by parents. One commented, 'The children enjoy learning and there's a wide variety of ways to inspire them'. Excellent multicultural work and excellent relationships contribute to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As one pupil said, 'We do lots of fun things. The Africa week was really good and we also sent money to help a boy in Africa.'

For their age, pupils have a first-rate understanding of the need to lead healthy lifestyles and how to keep safe, which is reflected in the school's Activemark award. Play and lunch times are active parts of the school day. Pupils know the value of eating healthily. One said, 'We have fruit because it is healthy. We have to eat healthily to be fit.' Decisions made by the school council are not only reflected in the daily life of the school but also extend into the wider community. They are rightly very proud of their charity work, including their support for the education of a seven year old boy in Uganda. They are very conscious of the value of water as a resource and support a water aid charity. They have introduced a recycling scheme for bottle tops, which is developing pupils' awareness of the need to conserve and recycle materials.

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher, very ably supported by her deputy, and senior team, ensures that initiatives continue to move the school forward at a rapid pace. Leaders and staff at all levels are excellent role models. They have a very good knowledge of the pupils' needs and subject leaders are now fully involved in the monitoring of teaching and evaluating of pupils' progress. The school continues to improve because of this outstanding leadership and management. For example, more rigorous assessment and tracking procedures means that many pupils now make outstanding progress in reading and mathematics and the school is beginning to see an increase in the number of pupils achieving higher levels in writing. Governance is good. The governors monitor and challenge and are fully involved in the life of the school. They give good support. The school is accurate in its evaluation of its performance. The school is in a good position to maintain its current high standards and to continue to build further on its success.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation Stage is well managed and effective. Children enter the nursery class with knowledge, skills and understanding below that expected for their age. They settle quickly and make a good start because of the good teaching and the interesting curriculum. They make good progress and achieve well. Most children achieve the expected levels by the time they are ready to enter Year 1. Their personal development and well-being are good due to established routines, good relationships with staff and high expectations. Children behave well and any difficulties are managed successfully and positively. They are encouraged to develop their skills of independent learning through well-organised and practical activities. The Foundation Stage

coordinator teaches in the Nursery and Reception. This supports the planned continuity of pupils' learning through her first hand understanding and is also ensuring consistency of teaching. Children enjoy a range of outside activities. However, the school is aware that outside space needs to be improved and developed to make it more interesting and stimulating. Plans are now in place for this development.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing, especially the proportion of pupils achieving above average levels.
- Ensure that all pupils have a more active involvement in the assessment of their work in order to set their own targets.

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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	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

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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

24 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gorse Ride Infants' School, Wokingham, RG40 4EH

Thank you for your very friendly welcome when I visited your school. You told me you attend a good school and I agree. It was obvious from what you said that you enjoy school very much. I was very impressed by many things. These are just a few of them.

- You work hard in lessons and are successful in your work.
- Teaching is good, which is why you all do so well in your work.
- The work planned for you is very interesting. It is made even better by the visits you go on, the visitors who come into school to talk to you and the after school clubs you attend.
- You are very well cared for by all staff and you feel safe.
- Your thoughts and ideas are valued by all staff and your School Council contributes well to the running of the school.
- You are rightly very proud of your charity work and of your support to help educate a child in Uganda.
- You know how important it is to stay fit and healthy and to eat healthily.
- The school is excellently led by your headteacher, senior staff and governors.
- Your parents told me that they are really pleased that you go to such a good school.

Even in a good school, there are things that can be improved. I have asked your school to:

- ensure that teachers continue to give you interesting ideas to help to develop your writing
- ensure that you are all involved in the marking of your own work, so that you can understand more about what you should do to improve.

I wish you all the best for the future. I hope you carry on making Gorse Ride School such a happy place to learn and that you continue to become more involved in the marking of your own work and setting of targets.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony Green

Lead Inspector