

# Gorsewood Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111176
<b>Local Authority</b>	Halton
<b>Inspection number</b>	310526
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 March 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Clare Henderson

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>	Mr Adrian St Claire
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs L McMillan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 September 2004
<b>School address</b>	Gorsewood Road Murdishaw Runcorn Cheshire WA7 6ES
<b>Telephone number</b>	01928 712100
<b>Fax number</b>	01928 710202

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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 issues: standards and achievement in mathematics; the quality of pupils' personal development and well-being, pastoral care and the strengths of tracking systems in ensuring that all pupils achieve their best. Evidence was gathered from observations of lessons, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their work, discussions with the staff and governors, and analysis of the school's documents and parents' questionnaires. Other aspects 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 school, average in size, serves an area characterised by high levels of social and economic disadvantage. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well above average. A high number of pupils join or leave the school part-way through each year. Most pupils are White British: small proportions are of other ethnic groups. The school has gained the Healthy Schools and Activemark Gold awards.

## 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. Instrumental in the school's success is the outstanding leadership of the headteacher which promotes pupils' outstanding personal development and the very high quality care that pupils receive. Leadership and management, which are good overall, includes a shared commitment of staff and governors to the belief that every child, and the needs of the child's family are important and valued. It is these aspects that parents wholeheartedly appreciate. A typical comment is, 'Whatever the need, be it a school matter or personal matter, they are there for you.'

Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils begin Year 1 with standards that are usually below those typically expected of their age. Since the last inspection, results in the school's national assessments at Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics and at Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, have been broadly average. Current standards are in line with these results. The determination of teachers and support staff to remove any barriers to learning is evident in the kind, patient and understanding way in which pupils and their families are treated. As a result of this very effective support, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the lower attaining pupils make good progress.

Pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is outstanding. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in excellent behaviour and enthusiasm for learning. They say they 'love school', feel safe and know there is someone to talk to if they have a problem. Taking part in daily 'wake up and shake up' sessions helps pupils' readiness to learn and develops their awareness of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle. Pupils are very proud of their school and say they feel special in the 'Gorsewood family'. They greatly value opportunities to express their views and the many chances given to represent their school, for example, as school councillors or playground mediators. They take these responsibilities very seriously, for example, when they ensure that everyone is happy and safe in the playground. The older pupils help the younger children and those who arrive part-way through the year benefit to the full from the activities available. The school takes every opportunity to involve pupils in the community through, for example, involving them in deciding which fundraising ventures they wish to support. Within these roles, pupils gain valuable skills that help them prepare for their future. As a result of the very effective work of support staff, attendance levels are improving, although remain below the national average.

The good curriculum includes imaginative links between subjects which give meaning to pupils' learning. An emphasis on creativity successfully promotes pupils' enjoyment of learning and the acquisition of a range of knowledge and skills. This themed approach is relatively new and is building up term by term. The school has yet to monitor how well it serves pupils' needs.

The school does not miss an opportunity, through excellent partnerships and community links, to foster pupils' well-being. Extra-curricular sporting and creative activities, the opportunity to learn to speak French and a breakfast club promote pupils' fitness, health and enjoyment, and are very popular. This good focus through the curriculum on developing positive attitudes to health, fitness and emotional well-being is evident in the awards the school has achieved.

The good progress pupils make throughout the school is the result of good teaching. Strengths in teaching include good use of personal target-setting to involve pupils in their own learning, high quality relationships and high expectations of behaviour. However, in a few lessons, the

work set is not always sufficiently challenging to extend the learning of all pupils. The deployment of learning support assistants adds much to pupils' progress. Excellent use is made of outside agencies in helping to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with emotional problems are enabled to take a full part in all the school has to offer.

Good leadership and management have ensured that all previous inspection issues have been addressed and that the school has moved on effectively. The school's accurate self-evaluation ensures that the school knows itself well and contributes to exceedingly clear direction and sustained improvement. As a result, the school is in a good position to improve. Governors understand the school's strengths and priorities. They provide good support and appropriate challenge to the school's leaders. Arrangements are in place to meet health and safety requirements, including child protection procedures. Leaders and managers closely monitor pupils' progress to ensure that targets are met. This is particularly successful in ensuring that those who find learning difficult are given great care and support which enables them to enjoy school and make good progress.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

A significant proportion of children enter Reception with skills that are well below those typical for their age, in particular in writing and using letter sounds. Good quality teaching ensures that children receive a good start to their education. Daily learning of letters and sounds help to boost children's skills in reading and writing. Activities are well chosen to encourage children's independence and care of others. Leadership and management are good; assessment information is used well to match tasks to children's needs in the classroom and in the outdoor environment. This allows children to achieve well in all areas of learning, although by the time children leave the Foundation Stage most are working towards the levels typically expected. There are excellent partnerships with parents, who appreciate the welcoming ethos and excellent care their children receive. Links with the adjacent pre-school are well developed and enable a smooth transition to the Reception year.

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

- Monitor changes in the curriculum to ensure that pupils' needs are always fully met.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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	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	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	1

### 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?	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.

## 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	1
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	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 me very welcome and helping me complete my work. I really enjoyed visiting your school because you were all very polite and friendly. All the children I talked to told me how much they like belonging to the 'Gorsewood family', and your parents told me they are very happy with the school too. I saw you working hard in class and it was good to see you all playing together happily outside. One thing that really impressed me was the way you care for each other. It was also good to see you moving around the building sensibly and carefully. Here are some of the things I found out.

- You go to a good school where you thoroughly enjoy learning, try hard and make good progress in your work.
- The quality of teaching you receive is good.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy.
- The school provides lots of interesting activities, takes very good care of you and makes sure everyone gets the help they need.

I have asked the staff to do one thing: to put in checks which will see how well you are learning when you do your topic work.

You can help the staff by working hard and always doing your best. Your parents can help by making sure you all arrive at school every day so that you do not miss out on the fun times and good learning opportunities your school has to offer. I hope you will continue to enjoy school and wish you well for the future.