

Goosewell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113345
Local Authority	Plymouth
Inspection number	311223
Inspection dates	28–29 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Alex Baxter

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	553
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	George Maskall
Headteacher	John Stephens
Date of previous school inspection	20 January 2003
School address	Goosewell Road Plymstock Plymouth PL9 9HD
Telephone number	01752 482960
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This very large primary school accepts pupils from the surrounding area and further afield. There is a broadly average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups, but, although increasing, the proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is below average. There is a high rate of pupil mobility, often from service families. Children's attainment on entry varies, often significantly in alternate years, as increased numbers of children enter with below average communication and numeracy skills. Current attainment on entry broadly matches the level expected of children for their age. Although the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average, it is increasing and there is a high proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need. Mobility issues and those associated with learning difficulties and/or disabilities often affect some year groups very significantly, for example the current Year 6 group. The school includes an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Base, which caters for six pupils with communication and interaction needs who come from the wider area of Plymouth. The school also integrates ten pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties from a local special school. The school holds the following quality marks: Investor in People, Healthy School Status and Inclusion Kitemark, Basic Skills and Activemark Awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Goosewell is a good school. There are outstanding features, not least, given its substantial size, in its welcoming, inclusive, family ethos. Other strengths include excellent leadership from a dynamic headteacher and outstanding pastoral care from all staff. Consequently, pupils attend well, really enjoy school and behave and adopt safe practices in an exemplary way. Despite a high number of pupils entering the school other than at the normal time of entry, and increasingly with additional learning needs, the school continues to improve. Standards are currently average at the end of Year 6, and in relation to starting points, represent good achievement.

The outstanding educational direction promoted by leaders and managers has been particularly successful in recent years in raising expectations of what pupils can achieve and this is underpinning the momentum of improvement. Raised aspirations have also brought excellent links with parents, the community and outside agencies, which, together with good care, support and guidance, sustain the pupils' good personal development and well-being. Parents recognise and appreciate these qualities: a typical comment included, 'This is a lovely school that has gone from strength to strength.'

Children are taught well and make good progress in the Foundation Stage (Reception classes). Consistently effective teaching, focused use of teaching assistants and the pupils' positive attitudes and enjoyment of learning ensure that good progress continues through the school. As a result, standards are rising. Standards are above average in science, physical education and information and communication technology (ICT). This is because pupils' learning is less constrained by the relatively weaker basic literacy and numeracy skills, which stem from specific learning difficulties and pupils having moved schools. Standards are broadly average in English and mathematics. Even so, pupils' speaking, writing and mathematical problem solving skills are still not good enough and a few pupils underachieve.

Teaching and learning are good and are well matched to the breadth of pupils' abilities. The increasing involvement of pupils in self-evaluation is an improving feature, which, for example, has lifted the performance of potentially higher attainers. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, especially those with complex needs, are extremely well supported and have precise targets for improvement. At times, the guidance given to average attaining pupils, about how to improve and what they should achieve, is not as clear and this limits their progress.

Leadership and management are good. Innovatively constituted, separate leadership and management teams and effective structures of leadership and management at every level represent significant improvements since the last inspection. Colleagues, including governors, ensure that provision is monitored carefully. In particular, the monitoring of teaching and learning is of high quality. The use of target setting is not as effective, for example in accelerating the progress of some average attainers. Nevertheless, self-evaluation is good. This is evident in the consistency of teaching, the breadth and richness of a good curriculum and consequently the pupils' improving achievements. These show that the school is well placed to improve in the future.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Well-implemented induction procedures ensure that children make a good start in Reception classes. Initial assessments vary year on year. Those made this year show that children enter school broadly in line with expectations, but with lower knowledge of numbers, letters and writing. Children make good progress because teaching and learning are effective and there is an exciting, well-planned curriculum. Excellent leadership ensures that the spacious indoor facilities are well organised and provide a stimulating place to learn. This enables staff to provide a good balance between adult led activities and those the children choose themselves. Children with complex needs and children entering later than the normal time of entry receive excellent support. The majority of children enter Year 1 having reached most early learning goals, but using words, and to a lesser extent numbers, is still below expectation. The small, secure outdoor area is well used. However, its limited size and lack of some all weather protection limit opportunities for children to choose outdoor learning activities for themselves.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' speaking skills, thereby extending their vocabulary and supporting writing skills.
- Improve pupils' basic numeracy and problem solving skills in mathematics.
- Strengthen the use of targets to show pupils what they have to do to improve and indicate to teachers and learners what should be achieved.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Most pupils, across the range of abilities and backgrounds, achieve well at this school. Standards are rising and more pupils are on course to meet appropriately challenging targets. However, because a high proportion of pupils joined later than usual from other schools, often with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, standards are broadly average in Year 6. Children make good progress in their Reception year. Children do best in personal, social and emotional development. Most children achieve the goals expected on starting Year 1; however, having entered school from a low base, several children still find using words and numbers difficult. Progress through Years 1 to 6 is good as consistently effective teaching helps pupils build on previous learning. Most pupils do best in science and physical education by the end of Year 6, where standards are clearly above average. Many pupils also have good ICT skills. Standards are average in English and mathematics. However, pupils' confidence and skills in speaking and writing, by using more adventurous vocabulary, and in solving problems in mathematics are still not high enough.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They enjoy school greatly, attend well and have good attitudes to learning. Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously, for example as 'peer mediators' helping others at play times. Pupils' moral and social development is outstanding and is a key factor in ensuring their behaviour is exemplary. Whilst their spiritual and cultural development is good overall, pupils' appreciation and understanding of the diversity of life in modern Britain's multicultural society are not as secure, but satisfactory never the less. Pupils

have a good understanding of right and wrong and display a high level of consideration for others. They say they feel safe and secure and know that any rare instances of unkind behaviour would be dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils have a good understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles and are very enthusiastic about sport. Pupils play an active role in school decision making through the school council and involvement in the local community and charitable fund raising. Despite some weaknesses in literacy and numeracy skills, pupils' ability to work well together and their good ICT skills prepare them well for future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers and their assistants manage pupils' behaviour very effectively and share a real sense of enthusiasm that enriches learning. A close match between learning activities, good quality teaching assistant support and pupils' needs typifies teaching and learning throughout the school. These ensure that pupils learn well and make good progress. This is especially the case when pupils are taught by specialist staff and supported for their complex learning needs in classes, in the ASD Base and, often for example, in physical education. Teachers have strengthened how they challenge higher attainers and induct newly arrived pupils to bridge any gaps in previous learning. However, occasionally, introductory discussions in lessons continue for too long, and the pace of learning and pupils' interest slip, slowing the development of speaking and numeracy skills. Most teachers give good guidance through marking, but in some lessons average attainers lack sufficiently clear targets to show them how to improve. All teachers use interactive whiteboards effectively to provide visual stimuli to accelerate pupils' learning. Teachers also very effectively stimulate pupils' ideas imaginatively, for example role playing life in Greek and Victorian times.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is enriched by outstanding extra-curricular pursuits and very beneficial links with parents, the local community and outside agencies. There is an excellent range of well-attended sporting opportunities. There is a good curriculum for children in Reception and, across the school, pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility as learners. The increasing involvement of pupils in evaluating their own work is a good feature. All these contribute very effectively to the pupils' exemplary behaviour, enjoyment of learning and healthy, safe lifestyles. The teaching of French and German brings good opportunities for pupils to understand different cultures. Provision for ICT is good. The school ensures that the curriculum meets pupils' diverse needs well and has recently strengthened provision for those who join the school in midstream. Provision for literacy and numeracy is generally good, including in other subjects. However, too often, pupils' speaking and problem solving skills are not given sufficient emphasis slowing pupils' development of these skills. The curriculum is enhanced by very well maintained facilities, stimulating displays of pupils' work and 'celebration assemblies' which value pupils' efforts and promote good achievement.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care and the way all pupils are included equally in all aspects of school life are outstanding. There is a very pleasant family atmosphere and this contributes well to pupils' outstanding enjoyment of learning and sense of well-being. Parents value the way the school supports their children and comment about 'teachers really caring'. Pupils say they know there is always someone to turn to if they have a problem. Induction and transfer arrangements are good and help pupils settle quickly into new routines. Pupils' health and well-being are safeguarded very securely. There is excellent support for vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which ensures they make good progress. The quality of teachers' marking is good and provides most pupils with effective guidance. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities know and understand their individual learning targets. Other pupils, especially average attainers, do not have such a clear view of what they have to do to improve. The school is strengthening procedures to track pupils' progress and set targets for improvement, but these have yet to be implemented to best effect.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher gives the school an excellent sense of direction. He provides an outstanding lead in promoting teamwork and inducting pupils into a supportive, caring ethos. With good and often high quality support from senior colleagues and governors, 'Every child really does matter' at this school. Securely established leadership and management teams implement well-considered plans for the development of the school. These take increasing account of pupils' and parents' views. Self-evaluation is accurate and effective and is based on rigorous monitoring of the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. This enables the school to identify and sustain plenty of existing good, and often better, practice and address inconsistency in procedures. However, target setting is not yet managed to ensure it is used in a sufficiently systematic way to have a sharp enough impact on pupils' progress. Other initiatives, such as improved curricular planning and increased use of teaching assistants, are increasingly meeting pupils' varying needs and have a positive impact on their progress. These show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
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	2
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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Goosewell Primary School, Plymstock, PL9 9HD

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. Everyone was so friendly towards each other, making us soon realise why you enjoy coming to school so much. We particularly enjoyed talking with many of you. These are the main things we found:

- Goosewell Primary is a good and improving school where you are all treated with equal respect. It is clear to see why your attendance is so good.
- The standards you reach in Year 6 generally match those in most schools. They show that you have been taught well and have made good progress in relation to your starting points. Many of you do even better in science, information and communication technology (ICT) and sport.
- You behave extremely well, really care highly for each other and have a good understanding of how to live healthily and safely.
- Your headteacher is an excellent leader. He is well supported by all other staff in providing lots of interesting things for you to do in and out of school.
- Yours is a very caring school where staff, governors and your parents work extremely well together and with other people. Together they make sure that you are safe and do well at school, especially those who need extra help.

We have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to do these things to help your school to become even better:

- Improve your speaking and writing skills by encouraging you to speak more during your lessons in school.
- Improve your ability to use numbers and solve problems in mathematics.
- Make sure that you all have clear targets, which show what you have to do to improve and what should be achieved.

Thank you once again. Please keep trying, enjoy your time at school and good luck in the future.

With best wishes

Alex Baxter Lead inspector