

# Gomer Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116181
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312203
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 November 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christopher Grove

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	244
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Mike Loneragan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Craig Williams
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 July 2005
<b>School address</b>	Pyrford Close Alverstoke Gosport PO12 2RP
<b>Telephone number</b>	02392 524312
<b>Fax number</b>	02392 581380

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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: pupils' achievement and standards; aspects of their personal development and well-being, including their enjoyment of school, adoption of safe practices and their positive contributions to school life; the school's use of assessment data and target-setting; the effectiveness of leadership and management. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, by observing lessons and sampling the school's documentation, and through discussions with staff and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection 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 in this report.

## Description of the school

The school is of average size. The pupils come from a range of social backgrounds, and about half of them live outside of the local area. The great majority are from a White British background so that few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, principally behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, is broadly average. The proportion eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has gained the Healthy Schools (Enhanced) award. The present headteacher has been in post for just over a year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Gomer Junior is a good school. The overwhelming majority of parents are very warm in their acknowledgement of its strengths. One parent judged that 'Gomer Junior is a very well run school'. Others recorded their appreciation of the approachability of staff and the headteacher, and of the excellent communication between parents and staff. Another wrote that she was 'really impressed with the direction the school is heading in'. Such judgements attest to the very good partnership that has developed with parents. The headteacher not only enjoys the enthusiastic support of parents but also of governors. His well-regarded leadership engenders a strong sense of team spirit among all adults in the school and results in a very positive and caring ethos.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils display a real enjoyment of school. Two parents showed a good insight into the school's values when they wrote that there is 'a focus on achievement through enjoyment.' Around the school and in the playground, pupils are very happy and relate well to one another, showing confidence and animation. In class, they are attentive and respond maturely to teachers. They comply with the 'Gomer Code', so that their behaviour is good and supports their learning well. Their overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also good. Pupils' positive qualities are closely linked to their excellent relationships with the staff. Attendance is consistently above average, reflecting the pupils' high levels of enthusiasm for school and learning.

Pupils show a good understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy exercise and participate well in the good range of extra-curricular sports. Through its strong links with sporting clubs, and through involvement in the Gosport Sports Partnership, the school is able to offer a greater than usual variety of games and activities. Lunchtime eating has improved as a result of the recently introduced healthier menus. Lunchboxes are of better quality than previously. The great majority of parents are confident that their children are safe at school, and this is also the view of the school council.

School council representatives report little misbehaviour or bullying. They are proud of their involvement in helping to select staff and of their contributions as to how to use the 'thinking room'. Pupils support a range of charities. Many in Years 5 and 6 act as playground leaders to support those younger than themselves. Pupils' good social and collaborative skills, together with their perseverance in solving problems, support positively preparation for the next phase of their education.

Pupils' achievement is good. Attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year, but typically it is broadly average. The standards that pupils attain at the end of Year 6 have fluctuated in recent years. In 2007, standards in national assessments were significantly above average, especially in English. In 2008, the provisional results show a drop in standards to broadly average in all subjects, reflecting this year group's lower attainment on entry. The proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in mathematics was similar to that attained in 2007, but in science it was lower. The proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in reading remained high, but overall English results were lower because of lower standards in writing. Although the whole-school targets set for 2008 were challenging, and were realistic in view of past standards, the English targets were not met because of pupils' lower standards of writing in the tests.

Work in lessons and the school's own records show that current pupils are making good progress in relation to their starting points. Groups of pupils such as those with learning difficulties, especially those with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties, make progress that is as good as that of other pupils. This is because the special educational needs coordinator, teaching assistants and teachers work collaboratively to provide well-targeted support.

Pupils' good progress is the result of good teaching. One parent rightly noted that 'the teaching is imaginative', and this is certainly the case. Warm working relationships and teachers' high expectations help pupils to learn well. Teachers plan successfully to meet the differing needs of pupils. The pace of lessons is brisk and this engages and sustains pupils' interest. Good use is made of teaching assistants, to support pupils with learning difficulties, including those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The assistants who work with pupils in the nurture group provide them with good support so that their confidence and personal skills improve.

Teachers are good at challenging pupils through thoughtful questioning. This helps them to assess pupils' understanding, and to explore their thinking and reasoning. In one very good lesson seen, the teacher set pupils a mathematical problem that allowed for more than one way to reach the answer. As the pupils used their mathematical skills and knowledge to find solutions, the teacher posed different questions to those at different ability levels. Pupils had good opportunities to explore their various methods and strategies. In another good lesson, teaching carefully drew out the agreed reasons for successful work in writing, so that pupils were able to assess the responses of their peers to the set task.

There are good systems to track and assess the progress of all pupils, and that of particular groups, for instance those who have learning difficulties or who attend the nurture group. The school's 'My Stars' system effectively integrates target-setting with the reward arrangements for all pupils. The system also provides good additional incentives for those who would benefit from additional support, for example, to stay safe, or to promote rights, respect and responsibilities. The school's target-setting arrangements offer pupils good academic guidance. Pupils know and apply their learning targets. The best marking of pupils' work refers to their targets and how well pupils achieve them.

The school has a well-planned curriculum, designed to promote key skills and values, such as cooperating with others and problem-solving, alongside the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The programme of work in personal, social and health education provides good support for pupils' personal development. The school also has strengths in the use of information and communication technology (ICT) recognised through the award of the ICT Mark. The curriculum is very successfully enhanced by a well-developed programme of visits and visitors, including residential trips in Years 5 and 6. Themed events, such as the environmental week and World War 11 Day broaden the pupils' horizons. There are good levels of participation in the broad range of extra-curricular provision, which includes instrumental music and the philosophy club, in addition to a number of sports.

The school provides good care, guidance and support, not least because of the excellent relationships that school staff form with pupils. Initiatives such as the establishment of the nurture group and the work of the emotional literacy support assistant bolster the well-being of vulnerable pupils. Procedures to safeguard pupils' welfare are robust, and arrangements for child protection and to assess risks are rigorous. Action to maintain pupils' above-average attendance has been effective. The induction of pupils from the adjoining infant school, and transfer arrangements to the feeder secondary school, are well organised.

The school's leadership and management are good at all levels. The new headteacher and other senior leaders have formed a cohesive team and have set a clear direction for improvement. There are rigorous arrangements to check the quality of teaching and of the curriculum. As a result of their monitoring activities, the leadership team has an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development.

The good individual care which pupils receive is an important factor in ensuring equal opportunities. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to the promotion of community cohesion. Good links with the local community have been forged but links at national and international levels are not yet well developed. Governors are committed to, and confident in, the school. They know its many strengths and few weaknesses, and are willing to play the role of critical friend. For instance, they have enquired into the reasons for fluctuating standards. The partnership with parents and the local authority support services is good, and this supports pupils' learning and enjoyment very well.

Since the last inspection, the pupils' achievements in mathematics have improved, as has the use of marking and target-setting. Together with the school's effective self-evaluation, this demonstrates a good capacity to make further improvements.

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

- Raise pupils' standards in English by improving their performance in writing.
- Take steps to improve the school's contribution to community cohesion by establishing a wider range of national and international contacts in order to promote the pupils' understanding of the diversity of other communities.

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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?	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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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 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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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

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

19 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gomer Junior School, Gosport, PO12 2RP

I would like to thank all of you, and your teachers, for your help during the inspection. I enjoyed seeing you in your classrooms and talking to you at playtimes and lunchtimes. Gomer Junior is a good school, which has many really good things about it. These are the most important ones:

- the school is a happy place where everyone is made to feel welcome
- you all show an outstanding enjoyment of school
- you have excellent relationships with the teachers and with the other adults; they take good care of you
- your personal development is good, and your behaviour in lessons and around school is also good
- the headteacher and the other school leaders are doing a good job; they do a lot of checking up, so they know what is good about your school and how to improve it
- you are making good progress in your learning; standards in Year 6 are broadly average at present
- the teaching in your school is good
- the 'My stars' system provides you with good rewards and targets
- the school has a good curriculum and a good range of extra-curricular activities; your participation is good
- the great majority of your parents are very pleased with the school
- your school has good relationships with your parents, and with other schools.

The headteacher and the other leaders have worked hard to make the school a good place for you. I have asked them to make things even better by:

- raising your standards in English by improving your writing
- giving you more opportunities to have contact with others outside of Gosport, particularly those who lead very different lives from yourselves.

You can help by continuing to work hard and taking advantage of the improvements that your teachers will be making. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Grove

Lead Inspector