

# Gorse Hill Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116752
<b>Local Authority</b>	Worcestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	312390
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Watters HMI

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	284
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Phil Clayton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Vivien Cranton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 March 2006
<b>School address</b>	Hollymount Road Worcester WR4 9SG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01905 23159
<b>Fax number</b>	01905 23158

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

When the school was inspected in March 2006, it was judged to require special measures because standards were too low and pupils' progress was inadequate. The quality of teaching and learning and leadership and management was also judged as inadequate. HMI inspected the school in December 2006, March, July and November 2007 and again in March 2008 to assess the school's progress in addressing these issues. At the last monitoring inspection, the school was making good progress in tackling the weaknesses listed above.

The school serves an area that has many social and economic disadvantages. When pupils enter the Foundation Stage, their knowledge and skills are usually well below what is expected for their age. Basic skills in language are weak and social, emotional and behavioural skills are underdeveloped. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils who are on the school's register of learning difficulties and/or disabilities well above the national and local authority averages.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Its overall effectiveness and pupils' achievements are satisfactory although standards are too low, particularly in Years 3 to 6 and in English. Over the last 18 months, there have been significant and steady improvements all round. The pupils' personal development and well-being, including their behaviour, are satisfactory. Pupils' attitudes to school life and learning are consistently satisfactory and often good. The provision and outcomes for pupils on the school's register of learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language are good.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with an increasing proportion that is good. Nevertheless, a few weaknesses remain, particularly the lack of challenge in some lessons, where pupils' work is either too easy or too difficult and not matched well enough to their different capabilities. The curriculum is satisfactory and there is a good range of enrichment activities, which improve the pupils' self-esteem. The quality of care, guidance and support is good. Pupils are well looked after and feel safe and secure. The school is successful in helping them to understand their emotions and appreciate the importance of respecting each other, themselves and the adults who work with them.

The pupils' attendance is well below the national average for primary schools. In addition, the attendance of just over 10% of the pupils is poor, and below 85%. The school is working hard with parents and external agencies, including the education welfare officer, to raise attendance levels, but is not yet making sufficient inroads into improving overall attendance. Most of the pupils whose attendance is poor make slow progress and attain low standards.

Collective leadership and management are secure. The headteacher is resilient, has successfully raised expectations and given the school a sense of purpose and clarity about what it can achieve. The journey out of special measures has been turbulent, yet at all times the headteacher has stuck to the task of improving the life chances of all pupils at the school. There is a good team spirit and senior teachers know there is still much to do to raise standards and the achievement of all pupils. For example, while monitoring is satisfactory, the guidance teachers receive to help improve their work is not always sharp enough and timescales for improvement are sometimes too long. The school has made satisfactory progress since the previous inspection. It provides sound value for money and has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The youngest children receive a good start to their life in the school. The Nursery class and the Young Explorers Unit provide a calm and purposeful environment for learning. The curriculum is interesting and stimulating and captures the children's imagination and enjoyment. There is a good balance between the direct teaching of key skills and opportunities for structured play and independent learning. Most children sustain concentration well because they know what they are expected to learn and are given good support to help achieve their targets. The outdoor area extends the curriculum effectively, and is safe and secure. In this supportive atmosphere, the children make good progress.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and further increase rates of progress, particularly at Key Stage 2 and in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Ensure all teaching is good and better, through more rigorous monitoring of lessons and sharper feedback to teachers about the quality of their work.
- Improve pupils' attendance.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory although standards are below average and too low, particularly at Key Stage 2 and in English. The majority of pupils are making increasingly rapid progress. Almost half of them achieve well. Rates of progress are good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Similarly, standards are higher in Years 1 and 2, where 72% of the pupils are currently working at the level expected for their age, compared with 43% in Years 3 to 6. This represents the legacy of past underachievement, which is now being tackled well. The progress made by pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who are on the school's register of learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good. In the last year, pupils' progress has accelerated rapidly. The gap between what the pupils should be achieving for their age and what they are currently attaining is narrowing at a speedier rate than in the past.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils are enthusiastic, friendly, polite and welcoming to visitors. Most have positive attitudes, are attentive and work sensibly in pairs and independently. These personal qualities prepare them well for life in the community. The majority behave well in lessons and around the school, although on occasions, at playtimes and in the corridors, some pupils are too boisterous and do not follow the school rules. Most pupils enjoy their lessons. They feel safe and know there is always someone who will listen should they have any problems or concerns. Pupils appreciate the role of 'peer mentors'. One pupil said 'they're good at sorting arguments'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory, and there is a developing awareness of Britain as a culturally diverse society. The school council has been influential in making improvements, for example in raising money through cake sales to purchase new interactive whiteboards. Pupils are also keen to raise funds for local and national charities. They understand the importance of healthy lifestyles, reflected best in their sensible choices of food at lunchtimes.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with an increasing proportion of good lessons. The use of precise learning targets is beginning to extend pupils' knowledge and skills. In many lessons, pupils can explain what they are learning and how they are going to improve. Teachers and their assistants work effectively as a team and provide well-focused support for small groups.

In many lessons, pupils' interest and attention are captured by imaginative and interesting tasks, which motivate them to do well and work hard. The pace of learning is good when pupils solve problems by working quickly in pairs and then reporting to the whole class. Teachers use assessment information satisfactorily to amend their planning and tackle weaknesses in pupils' work. However, on occasions, there are missed opportunities to challenge all pupils. For example, teachers' questions do not take enough account of the pupils' different starting points, particularly for the more able pupils during lesson introductions. Similarly, the pace of learning slows when pupils' work is not matched well enough to their different capabilities. Marking is supportive and often shows pupils where individual targets have been achieved and what they need to do to improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is broad and balanced and the provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. However, the low standards in Key Stage 2 and particularly at the end of Year 6 mean that pupils have much to catch up by the time they leave the school. There is a good range of opportunities for developing pupils' performance and creative skills in physical education, music and art. Key skills in literacy, for example improving speaking and listening, have a high priority in other subjects such as history. There is a strong focus on the development of personal, social and health education, which includes encouraging healthy lifestyles. Pupils benefit from the school's breakfast club, and several popular additional activities including gymnastics and rounders. Teachers use information and communication technology satisfactorily to support learning across the curriculum. Learning about the traditions and cultures of other countries and involvement in sporting tournaments with other schools extend the pupils' cultural awareness and social development. The introduction of French has added a further dimension. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to enrich the pupils' experiences and extend their learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The pupils are well cared for and supported emotionally, encouraging their enjoyment and achievement. Pastoral care is good and pupils' health and safety is promoted effectively. Pupils are aware of how to stay safe and look after each other and themselves. Arrangements for child protection and managing risks are robust and regularly reviewed. Pupils are involved in drawing up school and class rules, which ensure they know the consequences of unacceptable behaviour and the rewards for good behaviour. There are increasingly strong links with other agencies, such as Sure Start and the new children's centre, and these are helping parents become increasingly involved in the life of the school. One parent said, 'The teachers are welcoming, caring and very approachable.' Academic guidance is good. Pupils know their targets, which are challenging, and the majority make satisfactory progress towards achieving them. Many pupils speak confidently about what they need to do next to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has successfully changed the school's ethos, raising expectations and ensuring a more relentless focus on raising standards and achievement. The analysis of assessment information is accurate and used effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils'

achievements and target intervention where it is most needed. Strategic planning is good and self-evaluation is becoming more rigorous and robust. Monitoring is satisfactory, although on occasions, weaknesses in teaching are not followed up with sufficient urgency and clarity. The senior management team provides satisfactory support. The team is developing a clear and increasingly accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for further improvement. One of the senior teachers said, 'We know we have to be even more rigorous in our pursuit of higher standards and faster progress.' The chair of governors is supportive and dedicated, and determined to ensure the school builds on its achievements. He receives effective support from a local authority governor, who is at the forefront of helping the governing body develop its role in holding the school to account for the standards achieved by the pupils.

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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?	3
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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	4
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

13 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gorse Hill Primary School, Worcester, WR4 9SG

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so polite and friendly. Over the two years I have been visiting, I have seen your school get steadily better. Because of this, you have shown that you enjoy coming to school more than you did in the past, and many of you have told us that your lessons are now much more interesting. You have also told us that you really appreciate the after-school clubs and other activities which your teachers arrange for you. This is all helping you feel very positive so that you can learn more and make sure that your behaviour is always good!

We are pleased to tell you that your school is now doing as well as many other schools and that I do not need to come back again next term to check how you are getting on! I will miss my visits but am pleased that Mrs Cranton, the teachers, governors and all the adults who work with you have improved your school and the quality of education that you receive.

As Mrs Cranton knows, there is still a lot of hard work to come to make sure that you all carry on getting better and that Gorse Hill goes from strength to strength. We have asked the school to do some important things to help this happen.

- Keep working hard to ensure all of you make good progress and do even better in your writing, reading and mathematics lessons.
- Check your lessons more carefully and help teachers get even better in their work.
- Make sure your attendance is better.

You can help by making sure that all of you come to school regularly and on time. When you're away from school it means you miss out on learning and have to work even harder to catch up when you return!

I have enjoyed my time visiting your school. I hope that all of you go on to do well and send you all my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Watters Her Majesty's Inspector

13 June 2008



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Her Majesty's Inspector