

Godstone Village School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125021
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	315125
Inspection date	6 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Thrussell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr I Creed
Headteacher	Miss M Place
Date of previous school inspection	7 July 2003
School address	Ivy Mill Lane Godstone RH9 8NH
Telephone number	01883 742326
Fax number	01883 743646

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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: achievement and standards, teaching and learning, and leadership and management, gathering evidence from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with children, governors and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work 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

Godstone Village School is a popular, small evolving primary school, currently catering for pupils up to Year 5. A high proportion of pupils has joined in Key Stage 2 as the school has grown. Pupils are generally from advantaged backgrounds. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is generally below average. The school has gained a Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Godstone Village School is a good school. It ensures a good quality of care, safety and education for the pupils. Good links with parents, other schools and agencies contribute well to this. Parents are generally happy about the education their children receive. One parent commented that, 'our children are extremely happy and successful at the school. The staff are always very helpful and sensitive if any problems arise and quick to resolve them'.

Pupils confirm that they feel safe in school and can talk over any concerns with teachers. They enjoy many things about school, shown in their mostly good attendance, which the school continually strives to improve. They particularly enjoy creative and practical lessons, provided by a good, enriched curriculum. A good range of well supported clubs, visits and visitors, along with frequent community events, promote pupils' personal and social development well. The many opportunities for physical exercise and sport encourage pupils to keep fit. They understand the importance of eating the right things, and are appreciative of the healthy meals cooked at the school. The school council is keen to take on responsibilities and has a good understanding of its role. Behaviour in and around school is generally very good. In the few lessons where pupils are not fully involved and appropriately challenged, behaviour slips a little as pupils lose concentration and start to chatter. Overall, pupils have positive attitudes to school and their learning, which contributes to the good progress they make and the standards they achieve.

Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. At the end of Year 2, standards are well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. They continue to make good progress in Years 3, 4 and 5 towards the challenging end-of-year targets set for them. Progress is carefully monitored and any pupils not doing as well as expected are quickly identified. Well targeted support is provided for these pupils, helping them to catch up, and also for those with particular learning difficulties or disabilities, enabling them also to make good progress. Initiatives to further improve spelling and reading have recently been introduced, including whole-class guided reading sessions. A focus on visual literacy, using children's films as a stimulus, is particularly helping boys to improve their writing. The school is aware of the need to develop its provision for gifted and talented pupils. Given their good level of basic skills and personal development, pupils are well prepared for their future life and learning.

Teachers plan and prepare lessons well so that little time is wasted and pupils generally make good progress in their learning. Teaching assistants provide good support for the groups they work with, although not always fully utilised throughout lessons. Occasionally work is not matched well enough to all abilities. This means that some more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged and the work for a few less able pupils is too difficult, so slowing the progress of these groups. Marking in books is constructive, showing pupils how well they have done and giving pointers for improvement. Lessons have clear objectives and pupils know what they are expected to achieve in lessons. Opportunities are generally provided for pupils to evaluate how well they have done at the end of lessons and to think of how they could make their work better. Although planned, the school has yet to be set individual targets to involve and guide pupils more in their own learning.

The school improvement plan sets out appropriate areas for improvement, based on careful self-evaluation, including a review of the curriculum. The curriculum has a strong focus on literacy and numeracy, and meets the learning needs of all pupils the great majority of the time. The school is now starting to plan links between subjects to make learning more interesting

and purposeful. It particularly wants to encourage pupils to take more initiative in their learning, and to provide further opportunities for them to apply and develop their literacy, numeracy and computer skills.

Despite some tensions within in the school, leadership and management have managed to sustain pupils' good levels of academic and personal development. Lessons are regularly monitored and points for development given, so that teaching overall is good. Recent staff changes have resulted in the formation of a new senior management team who have already identified and planned improvements that are starting to meet with success. Nevertheless, this tension still remains, particularly within the leadership of the school. This clouds the school's vision for the future and the improvements it plans to further raise achievement, as it becomes an all through primary school. It is yet to be fully resolved with the support of the local authority. A number of parents have expressed concern about the recent turnover of staff and the 'disheartening atmosphere' within the school. The whole governing body has not, until recently, been fully aware of this situation, but, with a change of chair and other recently appointed governors, is now resolved to help put matters right. Governors have a sufficient knowledge and understanding of the school's performance and ask pertinent questions about this. Given this concern and the newness of many initiatives, the school has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children are provided for well in the Nursery and the Reception class. A very caring environment supports children in their learning. Very strong links with parents and a caring environment ensure that children quickly settle into the Nursery and its routines. When they start in Reception, their level of attainment is above that expected at this age. They make good progress here and, when they start in Year 1, the majority are on track to meet the goals expected of them. A significant number meet or exceed these goals. Planning shows a good balance between activities directed by staff and times for children to explore and discover for themselves. Recent developments of the outdoor area have further improved the provision. The new Foundation Stage leader recognises that fuller use has to be made of both this and the indoor areas, to further encourage children to be more independent in their learning and the choices they make. Planning further identifies points for observation and assessment, so that an ongoing check is made and recorded of children's progress in the different areas of learning. Where children need additional support for literacy and numeracy, good transition arrangements to Year 1 ensure that this is provided.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the headteacher and new senior management team work harmoniously together for the future benefit of the school.
- Develop the curriculum to provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their different skills, work independently and manage their own learning.

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

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?	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
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	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?	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	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	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

14 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Godstone Village School, Godstone, RH9 8NH

I am writing to let you know what I found when I visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. I spoke with many of you during my visit and you were always interesting to talk to, very polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. Your school is a good school.

I liked these things the most.

- Children in the Foundation Stage get a good start to their time in school.
- You work hard and enjoy your lessons.
- You know how to keep fit and eat healthily.
- The school helps you when you find learning difficult.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and well looked after.
- Your behaviour and attitudes to school are good. Some of you need to concentrate more when working on your own.

I have asked the school to work on the following things. You are developing good English, mathematics and computer skills. To get even better at these, you need opportunities to apply them to areas of work that particularly interest you. It would also help if you could get involved in planning this work. The people that run your school must work more closely together so that you all continue to enjoy your time at Godstone Village School.

I did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector