

Gorse Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106321
Local Authority	Trafford
Inspection number	336656
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Lynne Read

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	327
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr L Walsh
Headteacher	Mr A Hargrave
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons and observed teaching in all classes. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. In observing the school's work, they looked at pupils' workbooks, assessment records, school policies, school development plans and spoke with the school improvement officer. Forty-one parental questionnaires were received, analysed and considered, alongside 41 questionnaires completed by the pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- whether lessons are promoting the best possible progress for all groups of pupils
- the effectiveness of measures taken to improve learning this year
- how well the curriculum promotes writing and the effectiveness of support programmes in helping pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the extent to which outdoor learning enhances the experiences of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and whether they are doing well enough.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average and serves an urban area close to Manchester. It holds the Healthy Schools Award. The take-up of free school meals is broadly average although it is known that more pupils are eligible. Around one third of pupils come from minority ethnic groups and 20% are learning English as an additional language. The school caters for a number of migrant and asylum-seeking families and those from a nearby refuge. The incidence of pupils entering and leaving part way through their education is higher than usual. An average number of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities although the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is double the average.

Some year groups are organised into mixed-age classes and, from Year 2 upwards, pupils are taught in sets for English and mathematics. The Early Years Foundation Stage includes a part-time Nursery and two Reception classes. At the time of inspection, the school was managing the long term absence of two key members of staff.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This school works in challenging circumstances. It provides a satisfactory quality of education with strengths in pastoral areas; outstanding care, guidance and support enable pupils to develop very well personally. Excellent use of outside expertise and resources help vulnerable pupils to overcome significant barriers to learning. Those who have emotional or behavioural difficulties are provided with excellent help and understanding so they are able to cope with the conventions of school life.

Behaviour is very good and harmonious relationships exist between the different age, religious and ethnic groups. There has been a concerted effort to boost pupils' achievement. As a result, learning and progress have improved in Key Stage 2 and reading across school. Senior leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and learning and keep a close eye on pupils' achievement so that they have an accurate view of the school's performance. They share a clear vision and ambition for the future and make good use of support provided by the local authority. The capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress from a below-average starting point. By the time they enter Year 1, however, their personal, and communication and language skills are not sufficiently developed to provide a secure platform for the Key Stage 1 work. They have an interesting range of experiences indoors but insufficient use is made of the outdoor learning area in the Reception classes. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 achievement is satisfactory overall and there are pockets of good progress, especially in Key Stage 2 and in reading. Current standards are broadly average by Year 6 in English and catching up quickly in mathematics. Attainment in Key Stage 1 however, is below average and the school recognises that this needs to improve.

Teaching has a satisfactory impact on learning overall. Much is good in Key Stage 2 where a new strategy for assessing pupils' progress has led to a rise in teachers' expectations. Lessons are planned to meet individual needs and include good challenge. This system is not yet fully effective across Key Stage 1 where assessment information is not always used to best effect. Consequently, some Year 1 pupils are moving onto the National Curriculum programmes of study before they are ready and lessons are not always planned to build accurately on prior learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory but the current system of curriculum management relies heavily on individuals and is not flexible enough to take account of changing circumstances. As a result some improvement plans have not been implemented consistently across school.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve children's development in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - accelerating progress in personal, communication and language skills
 - developing the use of the outdoor area for learning in the Reception classes.
- Improve progress in Key Stage 1 by:
 - developing the curriculum in Year 1 to ensure that all pupils have the skills they need before accessing the Key Stage 1 programmes of study
 - ensuring that the system for assessing progress is fully implemented and that information is consistently used to plan work at the right level of challenge.
- Develop a more collaborative and flexible approach to curriculum management so that improvement programmes are not over-dependant on one leader.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Achievement is satisfactory overall and it is often good in Key Stage 2 and in reading. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are learning English as an additional language often work in small groups or have one-to-one support. Their progress towards their individual targets is good.

On entry to Year 1, pupils' attainment is below average. Progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory but not good enough to raise attainment that is still below average by Year 2. Staff have placed an additional emphasis on learning about sounds and letters which is helping to support early reading and writing. Too often, however, the whole class is taught together so sessions do not promote equal learning across all ability groups. The current Year 6 pupils are working at a broadly average level, which represents a good improvement on the 2009 test results, especially in English. Across Key Stage 2 progress is accelerating and pupils are increasingly meeting the challenging targets that their teachers set. Many pupils are making up for shortfalls in their previous learning. Some especially good work was seen in Year 5 where a good number of the pupils were working at the higher level for their age. Boys and girls show the same interest in their work and progress at equal rates.

Pupils say they thoroughly enjoy school and are happy. They have a good understanding of healthy living and enjoy plenty of exercise. Pupils assert that they feel safe and that any incidence of bullying is dealt with swiftly through a tried and tested system. They have a very good awareness of moral and social issues and show great respect for cultures and beliefs that are different from their own. Attendance is above average when compared to similar schools. The learning mentor chases up unexplained absences swiftly and offers excellent support where difficulties are identified. Good opportunities exist for pupils to experience responsibility. For example, play leaders,

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house captains and prefects contribute much to the day-to-day running of school and the process of decision making. A sound range of basic skills prepares them satisfactorily for future education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory overall and much is good in Key Stage 2. Teachers make the purpose of lessons clear so that pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Good relationships exist in all classes and pupils say their teachers provide lots of help. Teaching assistants provide good, targeted support for groups and individuals.

Many improvements have been made to the quality of teaching, but not all are consistently embedded. More frequent assessments of learning have been introduced and are used well to set work for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those not reaching the expected targets. In Key Stage 2 they are also used to set challenging work for the average and higher attaining pupils. This is not always the case in Key Stage 1 where sometimes pupils who are known to be at different levels of learning are given the same task. In Year 2, the assessment, tracking

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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and target-setting systems are not developed fully so the teacher has less useful information to plan lessons. A more active approach to learning is being introduced in classes but there are still some occasions when pupils sit listening to the teacher for too long.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall and there are some good features. Links between subjects are developing well and providing varied opportunities for pupils to apply their computer and writing skills. Music has a high profile within the curriculum with good opportunities for pupils to learn a musical instrument. Links with local schools enhance the opportunities provided, for example, in competitive sport and learning French. At present, however, the Year 1 curriculum is not meeting all pupils' needs.

The school takes outstanding care of its pupils and their welfare is at the heart of its work. It is acclaimed as a leader of excellent practice within the local authority. Pupils are cocooned within this safe, nurturing environment. Many arrive at Gorse Hill after prolonged periods of difficulties at other settings. They are extremely well supported and enabled to make the best of the opportunities provided. The learning mentor plays a pivotal role in caring for pupils, especially those who are vulnerable. She forges links with families and promotes the pupils' self-esteem and social skills.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's vision is instrumental in maintaining outstanding care for pupils and promoting their personal development. The senior leadership team provides clear direction for the school and both staff and governors share a challenging agenda for improvement in standards and progress. The school is a welcoming place and generates a sense of belonging among staff and pupils. Community cohesion is good and the school holds a high profile in the locality. Pupils study their local area and are aware of national and global issues that might affect them. There is no discrimination in school and all groups of pupils have full and equal access to all activities.

The senior management team is driving through improvements in provision and pockets of better progress are emerging, for example, in Key Stage 2. At present, there is little distribution of management roles. Each key stage leader is also responsible for curriculum development in the basic skills for the relevant age group, as well as assessment, tracking and target setting. Consequently, the success of improvement planning is too often dependant on one key person.

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Value for money is satisfactory; funds have been intelligently directed to provide a bright, pleasant environment for learning. Safeguarding measures are good and enhanced by good links with outside partners. For example, liaison with the community police and social services ensures that children are safe and that staff are very well trained in child protection procedures. Governors successfully carry out their statutory duties. They have a secure overview of standards, pastoral care and safeguarding. Following an active campaign to recruit governors, several new members have recently joined and are embarking on training programmes to equip them for their new roles and responsibilities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

As they enter the Nursery, children's skills are below that expected for their age. Their progress is satisfactory overall in this and the Reception classes. By the time they enter Year 1 some aspects of their learning are close to average. However, in communication and language, and personal and social skills their attainment is below average.

A range of teaching methods and some good resources provide a sound learning environment and sufficient activities to meet children's needs. In some parts of the day children are free to choose their own activities but too much time is spent in teacher-directed sessions in the Reception class. This restricts opportunities for children to explore, investigate and develop independent learning skills. In addition, the outdoor learning area is not developed as well as it could be to extend experiences for children in the Reception class. Staff are now including more work on letters and sounds to help develop language skills, but children in the Reception class do not have enough

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experience of role play and other activities to develop their communication skills fully. Welfare arrangements meet requirements and the accommodation is secure. Effective induction procedures help children to settle quickly. Good links with outside agencies and parents help to ensure that additional support is targeted to those needing additional help. Leadership and management are satisfactory and some improvements have been made, but the pace of change has been slow.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers commend the pastoral care and appreciate the fact that leaders and teachers are approachable and helpful. All of the parents and carers who replied to the questionnaire agree that their children enjoy school. They feel that their children are safe and say the school is run effectively. Inspectors agree with their views. A minority raised concerns about the help they receive to support their children's learning. Inspection found this to be good with lots of information readily available. Some also questioned how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspection found that outstanding care helps pupils to meet the school's high expectations of conduct.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gorse Hill Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 41 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 327 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	20	49	21	51	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	51	19	46	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	44	21	51	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	37	24	59	2	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	16	39	24	59	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	37	20	49	6	15	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	51	16	39	3	7	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	13	32	24	59	2	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	16	39	24	59	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	11	27	25	61	1	2	3	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	29	28	68	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	29	29	71	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	15	37	24	59	2	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gorse Hill Primary School, Manchester, M32 0PF

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave my colleagues and I when we inspected your school. We thoroughly enjoyed our time with you and appreciated all the smiles and help you gave us. In return, I would like to tell you what we found out.

Your teachers work hard to make your school a safe and happy place that provides you with a satisfactory education. I would like to say thank you to the pupils who filled in their questionnaire and those who chatted with the inspectors. You like your school and the team agrees with statements such as, 'The teachers give us lots of help.' and 'We all get along well here.' I think the prefects, house captains and others with responsibilities do a good job in helping to ensure the school day runs smoothly and in making decisions.

You are keen to learn and work hard. Those of you in Key Stage 2 are making better progress and have improved your work. Well done! I think it's time now to look at boosting progress for the younger ones and those in Key Stage 1. I have, therefore, asked your teachers to:

- help children in the Nursery, Reception and Year 1 classes to develop a better foundation for their school work, especially in language and personal skills
- make better use of the outdoor learning area in the Reception class so children have a wider range of play experiences
- share out some management responsibilities among themselves so that they work in a more collaborative way.

You can help by continuing to try hard and getting on so well together. Thank you once again for the interesting conversations we had and for letting us share your work and play.

Please accept my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lynne Read

Lead inspector

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