

Gorse Hill Community Primary School

Inspection report

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|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Unique Reference Number | 116752 |
| Local Authority | Worcestershire |
| Inspection number | 338884 |
| Inspection dates | 12–13 May 2010 |
| Reporting inspector | Peter Kerr |

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

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|--|--|
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 274 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Phil Clayton |
| Headteacher | Vivienne Cranton |
| Date of previous school inspection | 11 June 2008 |
| School address | Hollymount Road Worcester Worcestershire |
| Telephone number | 01905 23159 |
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Eighteen lessons were observed and all ten class teachers were seen teaching. Discussions were held with governors, groups of pupils and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school policies, monitoring files, records of pupils' progress and 33 questionnaires completed by parents and carers.

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

- the progress made by pupils in each class over the past year compared to recent trends
- standards in mathematics
- the consistency of teaching throughout the school
- whether enough is being done to raise attendance.

Information about the school

The school is larger than average. Half the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is more than in most schools. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and of those learning English as an additional language are broadly average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is high, but a below average number of pupils have a statement of needs. The school is a registered Eco-school and holds a National Association of Professional Teaching Assistants (NAPTA) award for the management and development of support 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

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. The nursery and reception classes provide a good start for the children, who make good progress from very low starting points in many areas of their development. The attractive, lively environment is well-suited to their needs. Through the rest of the school, progress is satisfactory, but standards remain low because of inadequate progress in the past. Progress in reading and writing is good because of a sustained focus on raising standards in English. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory and strongly improving, although weaknesses remain in the pupils' mental calculation skills. Attendance remains low, despite the school's strenuous efforts to improve it. The number of persistent absentees has been significantly reduced, but more could be done to encourage better attendance through rewards within the school. Pupils mostly behave well, but the poor behaviour of a small number of pupils occasionally slows learning. The school provides particularly well for the most vulnerable pupils and their families. Pupils feel very safe in school and are confident that any bullying will be swiftly and properly dealt with. They make good efforts to lead healthy lives through regular exercise and eating sensibly.

Teachers prepare lessons adequately, but there is too much emphasis on teacher input and not enough on children learning independently. Teachers do not make enough use of questioning to probe pupils' understanding and adjust lessons accordingly. Some lively, well-informed teaching in English captures pupils' interest and promotes their learning well, for example through drama and role play. Teachers are less confident in engaging pupils creatively in mathematical learning. The curriculum is satisfactory, with good provision for English, including useful links with other subjects such as history and geography. Not enough is done to foster good learning in mathematics and science through cross-curricular links.

The headteacher provides clear, decisive leadership but the current management structure does not provide sufficient support to implement and sustain improvements. The governing body recognises this and has already taken steps to strengthen the senior leadership team for the next school year. Despite recruitment difficulties, the governing body has made good recent improvements to the way it monitors pupils' progress. Governors and staff know the main strengths and weaknesses of the school through sound self-evaluation. They have used this knowledge to raise standards in English and establish an improving trend in mathematics. This shows the school's satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Raise attainment in mathematics by:
 - providing more practical opportunities for pupils' to apply their mental calculation skills
 - giving pupils more opportunities in lessons to fully explain their thinking
 - providing a wider range of open-ended investigations to deepen pupils' understanding.
- Improve the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good by:
 - reducing the amount of time spent on teacher input and increasing the time available for pupils to learn independently and collaboratively
 - ensuring that questioning probes pupils' understanding
 - identifying opportunities to increase the level of challenge and move pupils' learning on more quickly during lessons
 - improving teachers' knowledge and confidence in mathematics so that they support pupils more effectively in using and applying their skills across the curriculum.
- Reduce the absence rate further by more actively promoting and rewarding good attendance within the school.
- 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**

Attainment is low but is improving. In 2009, attainment was broadly average in English and pupils had made satisfactory gains during Key Stage 2. However, in mathematics and science, attainment was significantly below the national average and some pupils had made inadequate progress. This major weakness has been addressed. Currently, pupils in all year groups are making at least the expected gains each term in mathematics and science and exceeding them in English. This increased progress is securely established and accelerating. Pupils' achievements are therefore satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers because the support they receive is matched well to their individual needs. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make rapid progress once they have begun to master English because of the good specialist support they receive.

Pupils show enthusiasm for learning when lessons stimulate their interest, as was seen in a Year 3 drama session linked to independent research pupils had done on the rain forest. In these situations, learning is enjoyable and behaviour is good. These positive attitudes to learning, together with good self-esteem give the pupils a sound preparation for secondary school. Although behaviour is often good, this is not consistently the case. When lessons are not well-matched to the pupils' needs and interests, the poor behaviour of a few pupils contributes towards unsatisfactory learning.

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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 | 4 |
| 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 | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils feel safe | 2 |
| Pupils' behaviour | 3 |
| The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community | 3 |
| 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 | 4 |
| The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |

How effective is the provision?

Although teaching is satisfactory overall, English is taught well. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of English, use assessments well to plan activities matched to pupils' needs and show them how to improve during lessons and in the marking of books. Opportunities are also taken to use and improve reading and writing skills through links with other subjects, for example history research on the internet. In mathematics, teachers' subject knowledge is less secure, especially in how to facilitate learning through investigations and using and applying mathematical skills in different subjects. Opportunities are also missed to get pupils to explain their thinking, assess their understanding and move their learning on. A limited amount of investigative work has been introduced, but teachers do not make best use of this approach to deepen the pupils' mathematical understanding.

Teachers' daily lesson planning identifies the tasks that are to be done by groups of pupils at different attainment levels and what support is to be given. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to the pupils' learning as they work on their tasks but they are not always used to best effect during introductions, for example to monitor pupils'

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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responses. Good examples were seen of teachers giving pupils plenty of time to answer questions fully and encouraging them to explain their thinking and to evaluate each other's work. On other occasions, questions demanded very brief answers, giving little indication of the depth of pupils' understanding or helping them to improve. The examples that were seen of pupils working independently and collaborating with each other resulted in enthusiastic, rapid learning, but this was not a consistent enough feature of lessons.

A narrow focus on reading and writing has restricted curriculum innovation over recent years. The school recognises the need to find ways of making learning more interesting and varied for pupils so that they can discover and develop strengths and talents on a broader front as well as practise and improve basic skills. Opportunities for enrichment outside of lessons are good. For example, pupils get a great deal of fulfilment and knowledge through a well-established link with a local business that involves them in growing vegetables. The school is a stimulating and welcoming environment for the pupils, with attractive and interesting displays.

Good care and guidance enables reluctant learners to become purposefully engaged. The nurture groups succeed in providing a secure haven for the most vulnerable pupils, which helps them to cope with the full class timetable. This has contributed to a 30% reduction in persistent absence over the past year.

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 | 2 |

How effective are leadership and management?

Sharper monitoring has improved the quality of teaching of English since the last inspection. The deployment of senior staff in teaching roles has improved the quality of the learning environment, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but has meant that too much responsibility for whole-school improvement has rested with the headteacher.

The governing body and staff are fully involved in school development planning so that they feel a shared responsibility for pupils' achievements. Parents are generally happy with the school and those who volunteer to help in school make a good contribution to the pupils' learning. Partnerships with a range of organisations enrich the pupils' learning, for example through gardening, sport and verse-speaking, but possibilities to support learning in mathematics and science through partnerships are not fully exploited. Procedures for safeguarding pupils and ensuring equality of opportunity are

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sound. For example, the school has eliminated the girls' underachievement identified in 2009 by successfully improving their confidence and participation in lessons. The school makes adequate provision for promoting community cohesion. A plan is in place and some actions taken to improve the pupils' appreciation of diversity but the governing body does not yet have clear procedures to evaluate the success of the measures that are taken.

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 | 3 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination | 3 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion | 3 |
| The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money | 3 |

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage setting provides a secure, welcoming start to school for the children. Attractive and stimulating displays, particularly in the reception class, motivate the children to explore. On entry to the nursery, many children have very low attainment across the areas of learning. A sharp focus on their social and emotional development, and communication, language and literacy, enables them to make good progress in settling in and beginning to make the best of the opportunities provided for them. For example, children showed great enjoyment and good skills when a group recited a story they had learned by heart to the other children.

Many examples were seen of children playing happily together, communicating with and helping each other. Children learning English as an additional language are rapidly integrated. They benefit from the individualised support they receive, including being paired with children who have the same home language and through the contribution of staff and volunteers who speak their home language. The activities that are planned have a clear purpose and encourage the children to talk and learn, especially helping their social, language and mathematical development. For example, two Polish children

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chatted constructively in a mixture of Polish and English as they pegged attractive numbered 'clothing' items onto a line.

Assessment and tracking procedures have been greatly improved. These show that nearly all the children are making better than expected progress, both in the nursery and in reception. Areas of weakness are identified and steps taken to remedy them. For example, it became apparent that attainment in creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world was not as good as had been expected, so more opportunities to explore and learn in these areas are now provided. During the inspection, children were searching the outdoor area for 'minibeasts' and talking in detail about some of the creatures they saw. Teachers strike a good balance between helping the children to learn as they play indoors and outdoors and teaching them directly in short bursts. An excellent session was seen during the inspection in which a child described a creature to the rest of the class to see if they could guess what it was. All the children were engrossed and rich language development occurred. The provision is well led and managed, with good arrangements for children making rapid progress to move early onto Year 1 work and for the lowest attaining children to have extra time to catch up within the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the end of reception, despite their good progress, children's attainment is still below that expected for their age.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

| | |
|--|----------|
| Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| Taking into account: | |
| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |

Views of parents and carers

The views of the small proportion of parents and carers that returned the questionnaires were very positive. A few parents thought that unacceptable behaviour is not dealt with effectively. The inspection found behaviour satisfactory rather than good because of occasional examples of poor behaviour, but the evidence seen was that incidents were recorded and dealt with appropriately. Some children said that playground disputes were sometimes brought into the classroom but that staff generally sorted these out.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gorse Hill Community 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 33 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 274 pupils registered at the school.

| Statements | Strongly Agree | | Agree | | Disagree | | Strongly disagree | |
|---|----------------|----|-------|----|----------|---|-------------------|---|
| | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % | Total | % |
| My child enjoys school | 19 | 58 | 13 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| The school keeps my child safe | 17 | 52 | 15 | 45 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| The school informs me about my child's progress | 19 | 58 | 13 | 39 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making enough progress at this school | 15 | 45 | 16 | 48 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The teaching is good at this school | 17 | 52 | 16 | 48 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps me to support my child's learning | 17 | 52 | 15 | 45 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle | 13 | 39 | 19 | 58 | 1 | 3 | 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) | 10 | 30 | 21 | 64 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school meets my child's particular needs | 15 | 45 | 16 | 48 | 2 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour | 14 | 42 | 15 | 45 | 3 | 9 | 1 | 3 |
| The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns | 15 | 45 | 15 | 45 | 3 | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is led and managed effectively | 13 | 39 | 19 | 58 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school | 19 | 58 | 12 | 36 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 |

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

| Type of school | Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools) | | | |
|----------------------|---|------|--------------|------------|
| | Outstanding | Good | Satisfactory | Inadequate |
| Nursery schools | 51 | 45 | 0 | 4 |
| Primary schools | 6 | 41 | 42 | 10 |
| Secondary schools | 8 | 34 | 44 | 14 |
| Sixth forms | 10 | 37 | 50 | 3 |
| Special schools | 32 | 38 | 25 | 5 |
| Pupil referral units | 12 | 43 | 31 | 14 |
| All schools | 9 | 40 | 40 | 10 |

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



14 May 2010

Dear Pupils

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

Thank you for welcoming us so warmly when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you about your school and about things that are important to you. We saw you at work in lessons and looked in your books and at the records that teachers keep to see how you have been getting on over the year. These are the main things we found out about your school.

You feel very safe in school and do your best to stay fit and healthy.

The children in nursery and reception get off to a good start.

You are doing well in reading and writing, but need to get better at mathematics.

Most pupils attend school as often as they can, but some do not attend often enough.

You work hard in lessons when you find them interesting and challenging.

Sometimes the behaviour of some pupils is not as good as it should be.

Your teachers look after you well and make sure that you have someone to talk to if you feel worried or upset.

We have asked your headteacher and the rest of the staff to do three things to make your school even better:

- help you to do as well in mathematics as you do in English
- give you more time to work independently in lessons and ensure that all teaching is as good as the best
- encourage more of you to attend school as often as you can.

You can help to improve your school even more by making every effort to come to school every day, working as hard as you can in lessons and doing your best to behave well. We hope that you continue to enjoy school and that you do as well as you possibly can in the future.

Yours sincerely

Peter Kerr

Lead inspector

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