

Gorsemoor Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124183
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	340511
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Judith Tolley

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	532
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mike Walden
Headteacher	Paul Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out four additional inspectors. They observed 18 lessons; 18 teachers were seen; meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including the school's analysis of pupils' progress and its improvement plans. Inspectors received 141 questionnaires from pupils and 160 from parents and carers.

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

- the achievement of more able pupils at both key stages to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging, particularly in English
- the achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to determine how well assessment information is used in planning.

Information about the school

Gorsemoor Primary School is much larger than average, with a large Nursery. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is much lower than average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average. The school has achieved Healthy Schools and Eco status; the Basic Skills Quality Mark; and Dyslexia Friendly, Activemark Gold, Artsmark, BECTA ICT and International Schools awards.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Gorsemoor is a good school which provides excellent value for money. Excellent care, guidance and support have a positive impact on pupils' strong personal development and outstanding behaviour. Good teaching and an imaginative curriculum engage pupils' interest and ensure good progress. Attendance has improved over the last year but, despite the best efforts of the school, remains broadly average because a minority of pupils take holidays in term time. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding and pupils feel safe. Pupils say they enjoy school and they are confident and enthusiastic learners. They take their responsibilities seriously and make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community, for example, through the school council and Eco Group and as playground leaders.

Many children join the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are broadly as expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2, so that attainment by the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science is high compared to national averages. Accurate self-evaluation has enabled the headteacher and the senior leadership team to identify what needs to be done and this, together with very effective teamwork throughout the school, provides the school with an excellent capacity for further improvement. Standards have been consistently high over the last four years and continue to rise. Although provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, there remain inconsistencies across the setting, particularly in the ways that staff use assessment information to plan the next steps in children's learning. Teaching and learning are good overall and often outstanding but the quality, although never less than satisfactory, varies across the school. Pupils make the best progress when assessment information is used in lesson planning to challenge pupils and to provide the support they need to work confidently and independently, however this is not always the case. The curriculum meets pupils' needs and interests well. Pupils' experience is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities and visits both at home and abroad.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make the same good progress as their classmates. The school's strong commitment to providing equality of opportunity is evident in the well-focused support it provides for individuals, and its work with outside agencies to remove any barriers to their learning. The headteacher is strongly supported by the senior leadership team, and indeed by all staff. Teamwork is a key factor in the school's success. Governors are well-informed, supportive and involved in school life.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- Improve the consistency of the quality of teaching and learning across the school by:
 - improving the use of assessment in lesson planning to better meet the needs of all pupils
 - extending the features of the excellent teaching which exists in the school to all classes.
- Improve the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring assessment is used consistently in day-to-day planning in order to better meet individual children's needs.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

In lessons pupils make good progress. They are eager to participate in class discussions, listen carefully to adults and to each other and are keen to share their ideas. Progress accelerates as pupils move through the school and many pupils make excellent progress at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils make the best progress when activities capture their imagination, learning is fun and they are given the opportunity to explore ideas and solve problems with a partner. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for instance, pupils worked enthusiastically together to work out the speeds of different animals from the clues they were given. Similarly, in a Year 5 English lesson they worked very enthusiastically in groups to explore and argue the ethical issues springing from the Haitian earthquake and the destruction of the orang-utans' habitat. In the most effective lessons assessment information is used very productively to extend and support pupils' learning, enabling them to work confidently and independently; however this is not consistent across the school.

After a dip in attainment in English in 2009, relative weaknesses in reading and writing have been reversed so attainment in these areas is now high, and once again on a par with science and mathematics. The progress pupils make from their starting points is good. Assessment information indicates that the majority of Year 6 pupils are now on track to achieve, and many to exceed, their targets in English, mathematics and science. There is no significant difference in the attainment and progress of different groups of pupils.

Pupils know which adults they can go to with problems and have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe. They are confident that issues, such as rare cases of bullying or poor behaviour, are addressed promptly and effectively by staff. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and this reflects the school's work in achieving Healthy Schools status. As a result, they make healthy eating choices and enjoy regular exercise. Pupils display respect for one another and their teachers and have an excellent sense of right and wrong. They take time to reflect on their own actions and regularly help one another in class and around the school. They have a very good understanding of their own culture and other cultures. For example, through their links with other schools at home and abroad they are able to talk about life for children both in Belfast and in France. Pupils' basic skills and their ability to work

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collaboratively with others are developing well. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers usually present new ideas clearly and use interactive whiteboards effectively to engage pupils' interest. They use questioning to good effect to support and challenge pupils both in whole-class discussions and during class work. When pupils are given the opportunity to discuss ideas with a partner, their confidence increases. Occasionally, the pace of learning slows when teacher-led activities are too lengthy or when pupils are not quite sure how to complete a task on their own. Assessment information is usually used effectively in planning to meet the needs of pupils, and teaching assistants are skilful in supporting individuals and small groups in lessons. Marking is regular and encouraging and usually gives clear guidance, so that pupils know how to improve their work.

The curriculum meets pupils' needs and interests well. Pupils regularly practise their reading, writing and mathematics through a range of imaginative projects. The curriculum is often used imaginatively to provide memorable experiences for pupils. In

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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one lesson, for instance, Greek and Roman mythology came to life when the 'voice of Zeus' himself appeared to address the pupils! Pupils were still talking about it at lunchtime the following day. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching, for example, in music. Pupils' experience is further enriched by learning French and German and by a variety of visitors and visits, including visits abroad. Strong links with the local high school not only ensure a smooth transition from one stage to the next but also enable pupils to further develop their mathematics in regular master classes.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for those who speak English as an additional language, is outstanding. Focused support in lessons enables these pupils to participate fully in activities alongside their classmates. Carefully planned support for these pupils has resulted in significant improvement in their attitudes, behaviour, achievement and attendance. Well thought-out induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly when they begin school. The school works very effectively with a range of external agencies as well as parents and carers, to remove barriers to learning for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher's accurate analysis of the school's performance and the very clear direction for development that he and the senior leadership team have set are very effective in raising standards, eliminating weaknesses, and providing an atmosphere where achievement is valued and celebrated. Pupils' progress is tracked closely and this informs school improvement planning. Because all staff play a full part in school self-evaluation, they know exactly what has to be done to improve the school further and work very effectively in teams to achieve this. The senior leadership team has acted swiftly to eliminate relative weaknesses in English in 2009. Its success in doing this, in ensuring standards continue to rise year on year as well as ensuring all pupils can benefit from the varied activities it provides, are indications of its excellent commitment to promoting equality of opportunity. The school has yet to focus its efforts on driving similar improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, however, so that there remains some variation across the school. Steps are already being taken to improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage through the more effective use of assessment, although it is too early to see the impact of this.

The school works closely with other institutions such as other primary schools, high

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schools and the local university to enhance pupils' experience. It also works hard to inform parents and carers and to involve them in their children's learning, for example, through newsletters, parents' evenings and workshops as well as informal meetings before and after school. Safeguarding procedures are excellent and are kept under constant review. Good practice is rigorously applied across all aspects of the schools work; the school integrates issues about safety into the curriculum so that pupils have an excellent understanding about how to stay safe. The school's work with parents and carers, partner institutions and the local community is promoting community cohesion well. Pupils increase their understanding of the wider community through, for instance, residential visits to Belfast and to Germany and their study of French and German. The school evaluates the impact of their provision and have begun planning for the further promotion of community cohesion.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with skills, knowledge and understanding that are broadly in line with those typically expected for their age. All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress overall. Children make particularly good progress in their personal development and communication and language skills. Most begin Year 1 confident and enthusiastic about their learning. Behaviour is good and children respond positively to adults and play well with their classmates.

High importance is placed on caring for children and they enjoy learning in a safe environment. Relationships with parents and carers are strong. Adults know individuals

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well and enable children themselves to take the lead and to extend their learning. Activities are planned well to engage children's interest and enthusiasm and to meet their needs, for instance in enabling them to develop their independence through the use of information communication technology to find out about the world around them. Although teaching is good, assessment information is not always used effectively, especially in providing support in child-initiated activities. As a result, some opportunities are missed to promote children's learning through play and through interaction with adults.

The Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator has put systems in place to improve the consistency of assessment and planning across the whole key stage but this is at a very early stage of development and its impact is yet to be seen. Good liaison with parents, carers and other providers, as well as a welcoming and stimulating environment, ensure that children settle quickly and enjoy their learning. Although there is good liaison between Reception and Year 1, opportunities are missed to enable children to share facilities and smooth their transition between the two classes.

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	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are very positive about the work of the school and the progress their children make. They commented positively on their children's enjoyment of school, the approachability of teachers, the care their children receive and the leadership and management of the school. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed concerns about the way poor behaviour is dealt with. Inspectors found no evidence to support these concerns. Pupils are confident that poor behaviour is dealt with swiftly and effectively. A small number said they would like to be better informed about their child's progress. Inspectors found that parents are regularly informed about this and that pupils themselves had a very good understanding of how they were getting on and how to improve. Overall, parents' and carers' views reflect the inspection findings.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gorsemoor 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 160 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 532 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	105	66	50	31	3	2	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	99	62	59	37	2	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	77	48	71	44	10	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	92	58	59	37	7	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	101	63	57	36	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	68	43	82	51	7	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	82	51	75	47	3	2	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)	60	38	84	53	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	74	46	77	48	5	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	72	45	72	45	9	6	2	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	64	40	84	53	7	4	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	101	63	52	33	4	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	103	64	53	33	2	1	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

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.



18 June 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Gorsemoor Primary School, Cannock, WS12 3TG

On behalf of all the inspectors, I would like to thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. The inspection team really enjoyed talking with you all. They listened very carefully to what you had to say. I expect you would like to know what we think. You told us that yours is a good school and we agree. Teachers and adults in your school look after you very well indeed. Your behaviour is excellent. You do an excellent job in improving your school through, for instance, the school council, the Eco Group and your work as playground leaders. You feel safe at school and know that if you have a problem, there is always an adult to talk to. You told us that you enjoy coming to school and particularly like the range of clubs and other activities on offer. We can see why. Teaching is good and it is helping you to make good progress. Teachers make your learning interesting and exciting through the topic work you do and this helps you with your reading and writing. Your reading and writing has improved and is now as good as your mathematics and science. Well done! You reach high standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. We noticed that in some lessons you made better progress than in others so we have asked the school to make them all as good as the best by making sure you are all given the right amount of challenge so that you can do even better.

We think that younger children in the Early Years Foundation Stage can make better progress. We have asked the school to make sure that all teachers use assessment information on a day-to-day basis so that children can make the most of the activities they provide to help them learn.

The headteacher and staff are working very hard to make your school even better. You can all help by continuing to work hard and by continuing to come to school regularly. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Judith Tolley

Lead inspector

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