

Gorse Hill Primary School

Burleigh Road, Stretford, Manchester, M32 0PF

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has improved well since the last inspection. Achievement is now good across the school.
- From starting points that are lower than those typical for their age, pupils make good progress through each part of the school and leave with standards that are similar to other pupils nationally.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils very well and check their work regularly.
- Good support, whether through teaching assistants or good quality materials, leads to good progress for different groups of pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning are good. Staff work hard to keep them safe.
- Determined leadership from the headteacher has resulted in a shift in the way the school operates. This has resulted in good leadership at all levels and improvements across the school in both pupils' achievement and in the quality of teaching.
- The governors have contributed well to significant improvements evident in the past 18 months. They know the school well, because they monitor its work regularly, and as a result are able to challenge school leaders effectively.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in writing is not quite as swift as progress in mathematics and reading. Pupils are not always given sufficient opportunities to practice writing in range of subjects.
- Pupils do not always have sufficiently clear guidance about how to improve their work.
- Not enough teaching is outstanding. This is sometimes because pupils who are the most able are not set hard enough work and, therefore, their progress is not maximised.
- There are not enough opportunities to share the best practice in the school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons or parts of lessons. One of these was a joint observation with the headteacher.
- Formal discussions took place with groups of pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5, school staff, and representatives of the governing body. Many other informal discussions took place.
- A further discussion took place with a representative of the local authority and a local leader of education.
- Samples of pupils' work were analysed in their books and also on display around school.
- Inspectors took note of the eight returns to the online questionnaire (Parent View), the school's own surveys of parents' views, and spoke with a number of parents in school and by telephone and through letters sent to the inspection team. They also took note of the 28 staff questionnaires.
- The behaviour and attitudes of pupils were observed in lessons, around the school, in assemblies and on the playgrounds.
- A range of documents were taken into account, including those relating to the current progress and attainment of pupils and those relating to how the school keep pupils safe.

Inspection team

Jeremy Barnes, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Dave Blackburne

Additional Inspector

Barbara Martin

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average primary school and has rising numbers of pupils on roll.
- There are two classes for each age group, except in Year 5 and Year 6 where there is one class for each year group and an additional mixed-aged class.
- The school has a higher than average proportion of pupils entitled to the pupil premium. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- There is a higher than average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups. Many of these pupils are from Pakistani backgrounds but pupils also come from a wide range of other ethnic heritages. A higher than average proportion speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs and are supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has been receiving support from a Local Leader of Education based in neighbouring Seymour Park Primary School, arranged through the local authority.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and thereby improve pupils' progress in writing by:
 - ensuring that teachers give clearer explanations to pupils about how they can improve their writing when they mark pupils' work
 - making certain that most able pupils are always set work that challenges them
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use their writing skills at length in a range of subjects
 - regularly sharing the best practice in the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is good

- There has been a significant improvement in pupils' achievement during the past two years. This is due to raised expectations of pupils from school leaders and governors coupled with better teaching of basic skills.
- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with attainment below that typically expected for their age. They progress very well in the Nursery class and this is sustained in the Reception class allowing children to start Year 1 with skills broadly typical for children of a similar age. Children from all groups are challenged successfully, including to write at higher levels.
- In 2013, there was a drop in attainment at Key Stage 1 across all subjects reflecting the prior low attainment of this group of pupils. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has recovered well from the 2013 dip, and is now broadly in line with the national average.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve better in reading than in writing. In reading, a good proportion of pupils make more than the expected progress and begin Year 3 with higher than average attainment. This is not replicated in writing because pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to practise their writing in subjects other than literacy.
- The school has been successful in increasing the proportion of pupils who reach national expectations in the Year 1 check on their knowledge of letter and sounds (phonics). This is in line with the national average. This improvement is linked to a greater consistency in the way the school teaches early reading throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, where there are regular opportunities for individual and group reading.
- Pupils throughout Key Stage 2 are typically making good progress, particularly in reading. There was a rise in pupils' attainment in Year 6 in 2013 and inspection evidence and information from the school, indicate that pupils are achieving similarly average standards this year. However, in writing, fewer pupils attain standards that are above those expected for their age.
- Attainment in mathematics is improving. Pupils currently in Year 6 have progressed very well from low starting points in Year 3 and inspection evidence and the school's records indicate that they are likely to attain broadly average standards.
- The school has been successful in ensuring that pupils whose first language is not English make good progress. The well-resourced support programmes for these pupils, added to the improving teaching, have assisted them in making good gains across all subjects.
- In 2013, the attainment of pupils in Year 6 who were known to be eligible for free school meals was in line with the other pupils in their class in writing and mathematics. They were a term behind their peers in reading. This was a considerable improvement on 2012, when this group of pupils were significantly behind their peer group and shows how the school has successfully closed the attainment gap. These improvements are being sustained and the achievement of those pupils who are currently eligible for support through the pupil premium is good. This demonstrates the school's commitment to tackling discrimination and promoting equality of opportunity.
- The progress of those pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or who are supported through school action and school action plus, is good. These pupils are well supported by skilled teaching assistants and receive good guidance.
- Overall, the progress of the most able pupils across the school is good. The proportions of pupils attaining higher levels has increased over the past two years in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. However, for the most able pupils, their progress in writing is hindered because they are not always set tasks that are hard enough.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching over time is good, with some examples of outstanding teaching, and has improved consistently since its last inspection. A wide range of professional development for teachers,

together with regular checks on improvement by school leaders, has led to improved standards in classrooms.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, good teaching leads to significant gains in communication skills for all children, including those with English as an additional language. Children speak and write confidently and enthusiastically. For example, one child excitedly retold the story of Rapunzel using adventurous vocabulary, whilst a group of the most able children were able to write independently using sentence structure that is more typical of Year 1 pupils.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good, and pupils embrace the positive verbal feedback that is often given to pupils. Teachers are working successfully to inject challenge into the main parts of lessons, but there are some occasions when pupils are not given enough time or opportunity to practise their writing skills in a range of subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics is good. Strong features of mathematics teaching include the availability of a wide range of supporting materials, and also the skilful support of a strong team of teaching assistants.
- The school, assisted successfully by a local leader of education, has developed a 'Language for Learning' which has enabled key teaching features to be adopted throughout the school. For example, teachers skilfully use time to work with pupils on previous learning, and pupils respond to feedback with thought and attention.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and give many opportunities for pupils to respond. However, on some occasions, these efforts are not leading to improvements in pupils' work because the explanations about how pupils can improve their work, and particularly their writing, are not clear enough.
- Pupils are sometimes inspired to make excellent progress in their work. For example, in Year 2 the use of music and lighting helped to awaken pupils' imagination, leading to some impressive ideas about how they could improve their writing.
- Homework is given regularly and consolidates well the learning in school. For example, personalised programmes for practising reading are helping to motivate pupils and ensuring that they develop their reading skills.
- One strong feature of the school's teaching is the contribution made by a well-organised team of support assistants. They make a positive contribution to the rapid progress made by pupils who find learning more difficult than most, or who are learning English as an additional language.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are responding well to the improvements in teaching and they enjoy their learning, saying that 'it's fun'. They take great care of the variety of materials they are given, and look after their classrooms well. Pupils move around the school calmly and carefully and are well supervised, for example, showing good self-discipline when organising the morning toast purchases at break time.
- Pupils were polite and thoughtful when talking with inspectors and reported behaviour in classes as being mostly good. They have confidence in the staff's abilities to deal with any behaviour that could affect their learning negatively, for example, 'shouting out', which was reported as very occasionally affecting their work.
- Pupils socialise well and show respect to each other. Both pupils and parents report playtimes as 'not being very exciting,' and associate this with lack of play equipment.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils report feeling safe in school and this is because they are cared for well. The school is particularly successful in enabling pupils to develop as caring citizens who are able to think and reflect sensitively on important issues such as e-safety.
- Pupils and parents report bullying as being rare, and feel it is dealt with well on the isolated occasion it happens. Parents are very positive about the behaviour at the school stating that their 'children love to come here'. Pupils have a good knowledge of a variety of forms of bullying, including cyberbullying, and are taught about these issues, for example, through an

annual anti-bullying week.

- School leaders maintain records of incidents carefully and take action if necessary, including with the support of outside agencies. After a period of low attendance from a number of pupils, a concerted effort to support and target these families has resulted in a significant rise in attendance which is now in line with the national average.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is developed well throughout the curriculum and pupils from a wide range of cultural backgrounds socialise with each other effortlessly.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the last inspection, there has been a concerted effort on the part of school leaders to raise expectations of pupils, and to improve the quality of teaching. This has been very successful. All staff understand what is expected from them and there is a clear vision which is shared throughout the school. As one teacher said about the school's current development, 'We know where we are going'.
- The headteacher's determination has been crucial in making the necessary improvements. She has challenged staff to improve the quality of teaching, and teachers have welcomed the opportunity to take on more responsibility. The close partnership with the local authority and the local leader of education has also been pivotal in accelerating the rate of the improvement at the school.
- The change in the leadership culture is evident at many levels. Staff refer to a school where 'everyone is a leader', and there is an openness to coaching and mentoring which has empowered leaders
- Using the expertise of a nearby local leader of education and the guidance of the local authority, school leaders at several levels have ensured there is a consistent approach to classroom practice, which has helped to improve the quality of teaching and accelerated pupils' progress.
- A significant increase in the professional development of staff has contributed to the improvements to teaching. Staff have been given the opportunity to see excellent practice in other schools to good effect. There is now some outstanding teaching but opportunities to allow school staff to share that practice within the school are limited.
- Middle leaders have a clearer understanding about their roles and responsibilities. They make regular and accurate checks on teaching and pupils' performance. Together with senior leaders and governors, they have been vigilant in ensuring groups, such as those pupils eligible for the pupil premium, make good progress.
- Performance is managed well through the appraisal system, and pay awards are dependent on meeting targets, some of which are related to pupils' progress. Training has a direct link to the school's improvement priorities.
- The curriculum is developing well and has strengths in areas such as physical education (PE) and science. The school has been successful in gaining a recent PE Gold National Kitemark, which reflects its commitment to participation and competition for many of its pupils. It has also used the primary school sports funding very well to support PE and sports. Pupils have the opportunity to receive expert teaching. Participation in sporting activities has increased and pupils have access to a much wider range of sport.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is very evident in the curriculum and much work is done to enable pupils to understand other faiths, beliefs and languages. A recent trip to France for Year 6 pupils is typical of the school's commitment to cultural links.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have been resolute in their resolve to secure improvements. With the support of local partners, including the local authority, they have set up a Core Group to oversee the functioning of the governing body and the priorities for school development. This has been successful. They now share training with staff on pupils' progress and attainment, and regularly observe practice in the school, As a result, they are able to hold leaders to account

whilst also supporting their development.

- Governors understand the link between teachers' pay increases and pupils' progress and are mindful that only the best performance will be rewarded. Led by a knowledgeable Chair of the Governing Body, they have supported the headteacher in challenging performance at every level in the school. Governors' good understanding of the use of the pupil premium and primary school sport funding means that they have apportioned money carefully for the benefit of the pupils. Governors have ensured safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	106321
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	442353

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	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	E Williams
Headteacher	L Bates
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2012
Telephone number	0161 865 1209
Fax number	0161 865 8190
Email address	gorsehillprimary.office@traffordlearning.org

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