

Gorse Hill Primary School

Avening Street, Gorse Hill, Swindon, SN2 8BZ

Inspection dates 26–27 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	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

- Pupils enjoy school and make good progress in developing important skills in English and mathematics. From below expected starting points when they start at the school, pupils are achieving well and reach nationally expected levels of attainment by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils value their education, show respect for their teachers and generally behave well. They have a good grasp of how to stay safe both in and out of school.
- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Teachers show good subject knowledge and most lessons are carefully planned so that pupils are able to succeed.
- Leaders, managers and governors work together harmoniously and have quickly established a positive ethos in this new school. Effective monitoring of teaching and learning and rigorous planning promote improving progress and have enabled the school to develop securely and rapidly.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are inconsistencies in teaching, especially in Years 3 and 4, and not enough outstanding lessons to ensure pupils make outstanding overall progress.
- The curriculum does not include enough opportunities for pupils to develop and practise skills in reading, writing, communication and numeracy across all subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its policies, assessments, records and other documents.
- Inspectors observed 27 lessons taught by 16 teachers over 12 hours. Meetings were held with staff, parents and carers, pupils and members of the governing body.
- Inspectors took account of the 20 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and discussions with individual parents in planning the inspection.

Inspection team

John Carnaghan, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Mary Usher-Clarke

Additional inspector

Graeme Burgess

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Gorse Hill Primary is a larger than average-sized primary school that includes a large Nursery. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is close to the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium support (additional money allocated to schools by the government) is average.
- Above-average proportions of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language. The numbers are rising.
- The proportions of pupils supported through school action, school action plus and with a statement of special educational needs are above average.
- The school was created by combining the local infant and junior school in September 2011. It converted to become an academy in April 2012. The school has close links with a children's centre, with which it shares a site but which is inspected separately.
- As a new school there is no national assessment information to compare performance to the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the overall quality of teaching, particularly in the first two years of Key Stage 2, so the proportion of outstanding teaching rises through:
 - ensuring that teachers make the best possible use of time by maintaining a brisk pace throughout each lesson, allowing just the right amount of time for pupils to complete independent work
 - planning all lessons to provide the correct degree of challenge for each group of pupils
 - promoting greater consistency in the way teachers manage and ensure good behaviour in order to keep all pupils fully engaged.
- Develop the school curriculum further so that it provides exciting learning opportunities that ensure skills in reading, writing, communication and mathematics are promoted effectively in all subjects.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the school with below expected skills and aptitudes, especially in communication, literacy and number skills.
- Consistently good teaching and well-planned, engaging activities enthuse children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and, as a consequence, they make good progress throughout the Nursery and Reception. They move into Year 1 with good learning routines and are well prepared for the National Curriculum. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout the school and, when they leave Year 6, attainment is average.
- Progress is good because much of the teaching is good and promotes effective learning amongst all pupils. Pupils respond well to the school's promotion of reading; most read widely and enjoy it. Consequently, standards in reading in Year 2 and by the end of Year 6 are at expected levels.
- Pupils respond well to interventions, tailored exactly to their needs, and their good progress is the result of skilled staff using a variety of methods to address specific issues. In this way the school ensures an even rate of progress across all groups of pupils. It provides equal opportunities for all, fosters good relations and ensures there is no discrimination so that all pupils can achieve equally well. The school addresses effectively the needs of disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, and those pupils who are supported by the pupil premium. The achievement of these groups is therefore good.
- Pupils usually adopt a positive approach to lessons and their enjoyment of learning is evident. They enjoy opportunities to discuss tasks with a partner, and this is a feature of many lessons. In quickly switching from pair work to whole-class discussion and back again as requested, they soon develop good communication skills. Good relationships mean pupils help one another as a matter of course and ensure there are rarely any interruptions to the smooth progress of lessons.
- Pupils show mature attitudes to learning. For instance, Year 6 pupils were deeply interested in preparing a balanced argument about the pros and cons of school uniform. Respectful relationships were evident as the discussion, well led by the teacher, developed pupils' understanding of rational argument, particularly as the teacher elicited helpful phrases from the pupils, such as, 'some people believe' and 'it is often thought'. Thus prepared, pupils were able to write confidently about the issues, consolidating their good progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching in most subjects is usually good and some is outstanding. The most effective teaching is characterised by perceptive questioning that facilitates good learning. Teachers show good subject understanding and use this to demonstrate good practice and enthuse the pupils.
- Teachers are calm and courteous to pupils, who usually reciprocate by behaving with maturity and showing enthusiasm for learning. Some teachers forget to identify and praise good behaviour. When they are over critical of pupils this can disturb the pattern of generally good behaviour, slowing learning down.
- Well-deployed and skilled additional teachers and teaching assistants give strong support to pupils who require extra assistance.
- A good variety of methods, such as discussions in twos and whole-class work, maintains pupils' interest. Thorough planning ensures that the teaching of phonics (linking sounds with letters) and reading in general is good. Writing and mathematics are taught well, contributing to consistency in progress across subjects.
- There are some inconsistencies in teaching, partly due to the integration of a number of new staff, particularly in lower Key Stage 2. Where teaching is less than good the pace of lessons can deteriorate as pupils are given too long to complete tasks. Occasionally,

teachers hold classes together for too long so that pupils' attention can wander; the pupils then are left with too little time for independent work. While most lesson plans are effective, not all lessons offer the right degree of challenge. For example, when talking to a whole class, teachers do not always adjust their questioning and explanations so that all groups are fully involved.

- Pupils' work is carefully marked in conformity with school policy so pupils understand the quality of their work and what requires improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils, parents and carers rightly have few concerns about pupils' behaviour and safety. Pupils report that behaviour is good. Most teachers manage behaviour well.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive and their enjoyment of school is reflected in their attendance and punctuality. While some quiet chatter can disturb the calm of less than engaging lessons, this is rarely disruptive and pupils usually respond positively to teachers' admonitions.
- Pupils say they feel safe at Gorse Hill and that it is a happy school. They understand the various forms of bullying, including cyber bullying and racially-based bullying, and report that all types are unusual. Previous experience gives them confidence that such outbreaks are promptly and fully dealt with by the staff.
- The curriculum provides appropriate opportunities, including briefings from experts, for pupils to be made aware of potential dangers. Thus they are aware of how to keep safe, whether it is on the internet or on the busy local roads.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders, managers and governors have consistently pursued their vision for the school, summed up in the school's guiding phrase 'Every Child Can'. They have been highly successful in merging two separate schools into one and becoming an academy, in only twelve months.
- The development and persistent application of new policies and procedures have ensured that the school is a cohesive community, at ease with itself and committed to success. One consequence is that almost all pupils made good progress in the school's first year. School leaders use monitoring and assessment information perceptively to ensure that good progress is maintained across the school. Where assessment information indicates that an individual pupil's progress may be faltering, action is quickly taken. These features indicate that the school has continuing capacity for continuing improvement.
- Robust self-evaluation promotes improvements in teaching. Many staff and members of the governing body are involved in ensuring that teaching is increasingly effective. Leaders and managers are working well to deal with any variations in teaching and promote best practice.
- The school is rich in assessment data and, through regular assessments and systematic checks, works to ensure no pupils are left behind. These data are also well utilised to hold staff to account for pupils' progress.
- Such precise information ensures that targets set for teachers are both focused and rigorous. Staff are also provided with well-targeted opportunities for their professional development.
- The curriculum is well organised and provides interesting experiences for pupils. It is enriched by numerous visits and visitors and, notably, by master classes held for Years 4 to 6 each Friday. These enable pupils to pursue particular interests and include a 'radio station', various music ensembles, cookery and numerous sports such as martial arts. Additional pupil premium funding is spent well to ensure that eligible pupils are provided with the same range of experiences and achieve as well as others.
- Curriculum plans do not identify where there are opportunities to develop English,

mathematics and other skills across all subjects and occasions to develop such skills are missed. For example, teachers do not consistently display key words to help pupils use the appropriate vocabulary when they are studying subjects like history or art and design.

- The well-planned personal, social and health education programme promotes many aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The supportive and collaborative atmosphere that pervades the school is strong evidence of its success.
- The school's commitment to integrating disabled pupils, for example those who are visually handicapped, is beneficial to all pupils. The curriculum reflects differences in religious beliefs and culture through a variety of learning experiences and benefits pupils' tolerance and understanding. Pupils report that racist incidents are all but unknown. The school's efforts to ensure all pupils are included in all it offers help to ensure there are equal opportunities for all pupils to learn and that discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- shows a good understanding of the school based on clear systems to audit the quality of what it provides
 - ensures that audit information is used to both support and challenge the school. For example, governors' careful analysis of the expenditure of the pupil premium ensures that this money is appropriately targeted to areas of need
 - ensures governors are well informed about safeguarding and play their part in ensuring that the school fully meets safeguarding requirements.
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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	138004
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	400299

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	443
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Brian Mildenhall
Headteacher	Sue Kershaw
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01793 523800
Fax number	01793 523811
Email address	office@gorsehill.swindon.sch.uk

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