

Gorseley Bank Primary School

Altrincham Road, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5NQ

Inspection dates 31 October–1 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve well. The very large majority make at least expected progress and many make even better progress. Attainment is well above the national average by the end of Year 6.
- This is because teaching is good overall and some is outstanding. In many lessons, teachers set work that interests pupils and actively involves them through practical tasks. They give pupils a lot of support and encouragement to motivate them and to build their confidence. This helps them to develop excellent attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around the school. They show high levels of respect for each other and adults. They try hard to do as the school expects them to at all times.
- Attendance is high.
- Pupils feel very safe in school. The extremely good relationships they have with adults mean that they feel comfortable to talk with them and raise any worries. They are very well looked after.
- The headteacher is passionate about improving the school and gives strong leadership. She has a very accurate understanding of the school's many strengths and the areas that need to be improved, and is taking the right steps to change things for the better.
- The governing body is exceptionally well organised and is very knowledgeable about the school and the role of governors. Its members give strong support to the school and also ask the right questions of it to check it is effective enough.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teaching is good overall, a small amount is not of this quality. It does not inspire or challenge pupils enough, nor promote their independence. As a result, learning is not equally effective in all lessons.
- Not all marking of pupils' work gives clear enough guidance on how they can improve it.
- Although achievement is good overall, there are some inconsistencies in how well pupils get on and a few do not achieve as well as the majority in some aspects of their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons and made other shorter visits to classrooms to observe teaching and learning. Sessions where pupils were being taught or were receiving support outside classrooms were also observed. Inspectors looked at pupils' work, listened to pupils read and observed a range of other aspects of the school's work.
- They had meetings with groups of pupils, school leaders, representatives from the governing body and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents as indicated by the 56 responses available on the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) and through informal discussions with parents in the playground at the start of the school day.
- Documents were scrutinised, including information relating to pupils' progress and attendance, performance management, minutes of governing body meetings, monitoring and evaluation records and action plans.

Inspection team

Joan McKenna, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Maureen Hints

Additional Inspector

Desmond Stubbs

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average size primary school.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language are below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below the national average.
- The proportions of pupils who are supported at school action and at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are well below average.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2012, having previously been the deputy headteacher at the school. A new deputy headteacher joined the school at the same time.
- The Chair of the Governing Body is a National Leader of Governance.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a club before and after school that is not managed by the school's governing body.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good and more is outstanding, in order to ensure that the achievement of all pupils is consistently good or better, by ensuring that:
 - all teachers use the information about where pupils are at in their learning to ensure that tasks move all of them on equally quickly
 - activities and approaches used in lessons inspire pupils, challenge them all equally and develop their independence and initiative
 - pupils receive consistently clear guidance on how to improve their work through marking and that they are given time to act upon the comments made.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school with skills that are above those typically expected for their age. Pupils' attainment in English, both reading and writing, and in mathematics is well above the national average by the time they leave Year 6. The large majority of pupils reach the higher levels in tests and assessments at the end of Year 6.
- The school met all of its challenging targets in 2012.
- The very large majority of pupils make at least the progress expected, and more of them make good progress than other pupils do nationally.
- Pupils' achievement across the school is good. Their reading, writing, communication and numeracy skills are strong and this helps them to learn well in other subjects.
- Pupils of all ages are keen and eager learners. They come into school ready to soak up all that is offered to them and they maintain this enthusiasm throughout their time in school.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided with good opportunities to develop a full range of skills through activities and teaching that capture their interest. For example, when describing objects related to autumn, very good and imaginative language skills were seen in comments such as, 'it is like a bone because it is straight' and 'it smells like a dead pigeon'. Similarly, pupils in Year 6 were very interested, applied themselves well and acted very maturely when undertaking independent research on how mountains are formed.
- The numbers of pupils who have special educational needs, are known to be eligible for the pupil premium, are from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language are very small. Overall, their achievement is also good. Many do better than similar groups of pupils across the country, do as well as other pupils within the school and reach well above average standards. Of the pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, three-quarters made at least the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics last year and some made double the expected rate of progress.
- Within the overall picture of good achievement, there are some inconsistencies, and occasions when a minority of pupils do not do as well as they should. There is not a clear pattern to this. It applies to some pupils in different groups, subjects and lessons but confirms that learning is not yet consistently good or better in every lesson.

The quality of teaching is good

- The excellent relationships between teachers and pupils and the encouragement that teachers give their pupils mean that there is a constructive and supportive atmosphere within classrooms. Pupils respond very well to this and they try hard with their work at all times.
- Teachers know what they want pupils to learn, and they usually provide appropriate and interesting tasks to promote this. Clear explanations and instructions are given and pupils' understanding is checked throughout the lessons. Some opportunities are usually created for pupils to be actively involved in lessons through practical tasks or working in groups with others. This helps pupils to enjoy their lessons.
- Some teaching is outstanding. In these lessons, teachers think very carefully about where pupils are at in their learning, and what they need to do to ensure that all of them, whatever their ability or different needs, can progress equally well. They adopt different methods and provide activities that enable this to happen. Often, these tasks require pupils to think for themselves so that they are all challenged and their understanding is deepened. Teachers' enthusiasm is obvious to pupils, and helps them enjoy lessons more. The lessons often involve pupils working collaboratively with others, which develops their social and cooperative skills well.
- An example of such teaching was seen in Key Stage 1 when pupils were learning to write instructions. After a fast, light-hearted introduction during which pupils had to 'stamp their feet

three times' as an illustration of following an instruction, more-able pupils were quickly sent off to get on with writing instructions about 'brushing their teeth' or 'going to bed' while the teacher gave more explanation to the other pupils. When they were ready to work independently, the teacher brought the first group back together to work on evaluating the clarity of their instructions so that they could improve them further. Time was used to the maximum, and pupils of all abilities benefitted from specific input closely targeted to their different needs.

- In a small minority of lessons there are shortcomings that reduce pupils' learning. Sometimes work is not presented in a way that captures pupils' imaginations. Some tasks are too prescribed and opportunities for pupils to have to think for themselves are missed. Occasionally, not enough account is taken of the information that is available about pupils' different needs, abilities or where they are at in their learning, and so work set is too easy or too difficult for some of them.
- Some of the marking of pupils' work is detailed and informative, helping them to understand what they need to do to improve it. However, not all is of this quality. The impact of some marking, even when good, is lessened because pupils are not always given the time to explicitly reflect and act upon the comments made.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils behave exceptionally well at almost all times. They are very pleasant, polite and courteous, holding doors open for each other and spontaneously saying please and thank you. They are kind and caring towards each other and help each other in lessons and when playing outside in the spacious and well-equipped grounds.
- Strategies used in lessons to promote cooperative learning develop pupils' social skills well and help to ensure that they respect each other as individuals.
- Rewards and sanctions are used effectively to promote good behaviour and attendance. The newly introduced 'excellence visits' to the headteacher to recognise exemplary behaviour, which are also reported on the school's web-site and in newsletters, are popular and motivating.
- Incident logs show that behaviour is outstanding most of the time. Instances of serious misbehaviour, bullying or racism are very rare.
- Pupils show a clear understanding of what are safe and unsafe situations. They feel safe and secure because they are very well looked after and because they enjoy excellent relationships with each other and with adults.
- Those parents who made their views known to inspectors are very positive about behaviour and safety and say that their children are happy to come to school.
- Attendance is high and any issues to do with attendance and punctuality are tackled swiftly and effectively.

The leadership and management are good

- The new headteacher has a strong commitment to ensuring that the school becomes the best it can be and has set about trying to achieve this with calm, firm and clear-sighted determination. She has re-structured other leadership roles to promote the same clarity of purpose. There is a clear sense of teamwork, and all questionnaires returned by staff during the inspection were completely positive.
- The new deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher are settling into their new roles well and have quickly formed an effective team with the headteacher. Subject leaders carry out many aspects of their roles well. They know that their next priority is to make certain that all teachers use to best effect the information about where pupils are at in their learning. This is in order to ensure that all individuals make equally good rates of progress.
- Teachers' performance is well-managed and is linked appropriately to decisions about pay

progression. Appropriate professional development, both for all staff and for individuals, is having a positive impact on improving teaching.

- Based on an accurate knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas requiring improvement, well-thought-out plans have been written to guide the school's actions to bring about improvement.
- There is evidence of the successful impact of actions taken. For example, steps taken to improve outcomes in mathematics which, although positive, were not as good as in English, have resulted in pupils making better progress in 2012. Similarly, when it was recognised that progress in Key Stage 1 was not as strong as elsewhere in the school, wide-ranging changes were made and these are improving pupils' progress there.
- Pupils' attainment and progress are checked rigorously and action is taken in relation to the findings. For example, funding to support those pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used to provide extra support for them, and the good achievement of many shows it is being used effectively.
- The curriculum is good and changes have been made to it to make it even better. For example, a more structured approach to teaching reading has been introduced in Key Stage 1 with a resulting increase in young pupils' skills and enthusiasm. The new approach based on themes and storytelling, using 'inspirational stories', is leading to more effective learning across different subjects but, although this is carried out well overall, it is not done so equally effectively in all lessons. There is an excellent range of activities outside of lessons to cater for pupils' different interests, and specialist teaching in subjects, such as music and modern foreign languages, is ensuring good learning and high levels of enjoyment.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong, although there are few planned opportunities for pupils to develop a deeper understanding of a range of cultures. The school promotes equal opportunities well and works hard to ensure that all pupils have a positive experience and are successful.
- Safeguarding requirements are fully met.
- The local authority provides light touch monitoring for this successful school. The school readily engages with a variety of external personnel to help with developments.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body takes very active steps to ensure that it is operating efficiently and effectively. It has reviewed and strengthened the skills of its membership. It adopts comprehensive and innovative long term plans to ensure it is well-informed about what is happening within school, and so it ensures that the checks made on the school's work are very thorough. Governors provide a high level of challenge to the school while also being very supportive.

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	111013
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	403133

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	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	415
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sally Stedman
Headteacher	Lisa Woolley
Date of previous school inspection	18 March 2008
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