

Gorse Hill Primary School

Avening Street, Gorse Hill, Swindon, Wiltshire SN2 8BZ

Inspection dates

26–27 September 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' evaluations of pupils' progress and the effectiveness of teaching are overgenerous. This limits the precision with which leaders set relevant targets to drive improvement.
- Teachers' assessment does not routinely take account of pupils' different starting points. The activities that teachers provide do not consistently challenge or support pupils. This leads to variable rates of progress, especially in writing. In addition, boys' achievement is usually lower than that of girls.
- Teaching in early years is not yet good and children's progress is variable because leaders do not set consistently high expectations for children.
- Additional funding is not used sufficiently well. Consequently, teaching for disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, and pupils who speak English as an additional language, does not routinely support pupils to make strong progress and achieve well.
- The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is improving, but too slowly. This limits how well they achieve.
- Several parents express concerns about the way the school is led and managed and the effectiveness of leaders' communication with them. However, other parents are happy with the support their children receive.

The school has the following strengths

- Since the headteacher began in post two terms ago, she has improved safeguarding recording procedures.
- Leaders at all levels are committed to improving pupils' progress so that they achieve the best of which they are capable.
- Pastoral provision is strong. Adults in the school quickly identify when pupils need extra help to manage their emotions and behaviour. Pastoral support is improving attendance and helping pupils to focus on their learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders and governors develop accuracy and consistency in the checks they make on teaching in all subjects, so that they can improve teaching and increase pupils' progress, particularly for boys
 - leaders continuing to improve communication with parents and carers, so that parents are confident about the school's actions to support their children.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teaching in all subjects, particularly writing, routinely takes account of what pupils already know, understand and can do, so that tasks are well matched to pupils' ability and help them to achieve the highest standards of which they are capable
 - additional teaching for boys, disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and pupils who speak English as an additional language accelerates their progress and helps them to catch up.
- Improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils, so that they can benefit from all that the school has to offer.
- Improve teaching in early years so that children routinely achieve well.

An external review of governance and an external review of the use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to determine how these aspects of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders' assessment systems and their monitoring of teaching are frequently inaccurate. This means that leaders do not routinely identify when teaching is not consistently well matched to meet pupils' individual academic needs.
- Leaders routinely meet with teachers to discuss pupils' progress and to identify when teaching needs to improve. However, leaders' evaluation of teaching quality is overgenerous. This means that they do not intervene quickly enough to identify precisely what needs to improve and how. Consequently, several groups of pupils make weak progress and their attainment is below average.
- The special educational needs coordinator has identified some key priorities for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. Leaders use additional funding to provide teaching interventions and pastoral support for pupils. However, these are not having sufficient impact, and a high proportion of current pupils make weak progress. Interventions are not rigorously evaluated, which limits how well leaders can intervene when teaching needs to be adapted.
- Leaders' use of the pupil premium funding is not sufficiently effective. Additional adults are suitably deployed to provide disadvantaged pupils with pastoral support and extra teaching. The pastoral support is having a positive impact on pupils' readiness to learn. However, additional teaching is not specifically focused on the skills and knowledge pupils need to improve. Consequently, several disadvantaged pupils across all year groups and subjects do not achieve well.
- The school has made effective use of additional funding for physical education and sport. For example, leaders have engaged the services of sports coaches to teach pupils and improve teaching. However, the impact of funding has not been sufficiently well evaluated, so leaders are unclear how effective this has been.
- Parents who responded to surveys have mixed views about the school's effectiveness. Several parents are dissatisfied with the way that the school is led and managed. Typical comments include, 'teaching for pupils who have SEN leaves a lot to be desired', and, 'children are penalised, not celebrated for their uniqueness'.
- On the other hand, several parents who shared their views during the inspection and through the school's most recent questionnaire are happy with the support their children receive. They confirm that their children enjoy school and are safe. A parent commented, 'I cannot thank the school enough for the help they have given my child.'
- The headteacher has only been in post for two terms, but in that time, she has identified some relevant priorities for the school. For instance, she has introduced a new system to improve the rigour and consistency of the recording of safeguarding concerns.
- The headteacher and other leaders are committed to the welfare of pupils and to improving teaching. Senior leaders recognise that middle leaders need further support to improve teaching in order for it to have a more positive impact on pupils' outcomes. Teachers who shared their views say that they feel well supported by leaders. They appreciate the professional development opportunities provided across the White Horse

Federation and within school. They say that this helps teachers and teaching assistants to improve their practice. However, more time is needed to establish the effectiveness of this support.

- The curriculum helps pupils to develop their reading, writing and mathematics and to communicate their understanding in subjects such as science, history and geography. Extra-curricular activities such as sport, Indian dance and singing promote enjoyment in learning and encourage pupils to participate in wider learning opportunities.
- Leaders have worked closely with teachers and teaching assistants to re-design the curriculum, to meet the needs of pupils in the school's particular context. For example, 'language ambassadors' are encouraged to teach others about the language they speak in addition to English. Leaders have identified how they plan to evaluate the new curriculum. However, it is too early to determine how effectively the new curriculum will enable pupils to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in a range of subjects.
- Leaders use pupil premium funding to develop 'skill force' activities. For example, pupils take part in competitions or talk to visitors about their careers. This is improving pupils' aspirations for what they can achieve and developing their ability to work cooperatively with others.

Governance of the school

- Governors ask appropriate questions to find out about the effectiveness of the school. However, the information school leaders provide gives an overgenerous evaluation of the effectiveness of teaching. Consequently, although governors have identified some of the school's main priorities, they are unaware that teaching is inconsistent.
- Governors undertake visits to check the impact of leaders' actions for themselves. However, they are unclear about precisely what needs to improve. This means that they are limited in the extent to which they can assure themselves that leaders' actions are making a difference.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a clear culture of safeguarding at the school. All staff understand that they have a responsibility to keep pupils safe. Leaders provide relevant updates to training for staff. This means that they can clearly explain what to do if they believe a pupil might be at risk.
- The school undertakes the necessary checks to ensure that all adults working in the school are safe to work with children. The school records these details carefully on the school's single central record.
- Following the headteacher's appointment in January, she has implemented a new system for recording safeguarding concerns. Staff testify to the effectiveness of this. Leaders routinely take action when a referral is made, so that pupils are provided with the precise help that they need. Leaders work effectively with external agencies, when appropriate, to provide families with specialist support. Leaders routinely follow up

referrals to assure themselves that they are making a difference. They swiftly intervene when further follow-up is required.

- Staff receive training so that they can support pupils' medical and first-aid needs. They undertake detailed risk assessments to ensure that pupils are kept safe on school trips. The headteacher scrutinises and authorises these.
- Lessons, assemblies and posters around the school remind pupils how to stay safe, including online. Pupils have a good understanding of bullying, including cyber bullying, and say that incidents of bullying are rare.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teachers' assessment is inconsistent and does not routinely take account of what pupils already know, understand and can do. As a result, the activities teachers provide for pupils are often pitched inappropriately for their ability. Consequently, pupils labour over work that is too difficult, or complete tasks with ease. This restricts pupils from making effective progress.
- At times, it is unclear precisely what teachers want pupils to achieve in their learning. This means that pupils become confused and cannot tackle their work successfully, because they do not know what to do.
- Teachers' questioning does not routinely probe pupils' understanding or encourage them to explain their thinking. This limits how well teachers can assess how well pupils understand their learning. It also hinders teachers from extending pupils' learning.
- Adults do not consistently intervene in pupils' learning to check how well they are achieving. This means that teachers are unable to identify when they need to adjust teaching. For example, teachers ask pupils to do some calculations without checking that pupils understand how to work them out. This means that pupils' learning stalls.
- Teachers provide feedback in line with the school's marking policy. However, reviews of pupils' learning reveal that written and verbal feedback does not routinely help pupils understand how to improve their work. This restricts how well teachers can move pupils' learning on.
- Pupils have opportunities to practise and develop their reading, writing and mathematics across other subjects. For example, they record the results of scientific investigations using tables and graphs. They also write about events in history and geography. However, the work that pupils undertake does not take full account of their ability and pupils complete similar tasks, regardless of their ability. This leads to varying degrees of success.
- Additional adults provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and pupils who speak English as an additional language. Teaching assistants guide pupils' learning and help them to stay focused. However, the extra support the school provides does not take sufficient account of pupils' starting points. As a result, it is not having a consistently positive impact on pupils' outcomes and a large proportion of pupils have fallen behind in their learning.
- The extra support provided for pupils who need help to manage their behaviour is having a positive impact. Adults listen to pupils' concerns, carefully explain tasks and

intervene to defuse situations that might cause pupils to become angry or upset. This is helping pupils to focus and improving their attitudes to learning.

- Where adults explain and model tasks carefully, pupils understand what to do. Here, teachers use questions effectively to elicit pupils' understanding. When pupils have completed tasks or they are stuck, adults intervene to pick up misconceptions and help them to move on in their learning. This helps pupils to make effective progress and achieve appropriate knowledge and skills for their age and stage of learning.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and this is helping pupils to develop their early reading skills. Pupils are able to use their understanding of phonics to help them to write accurately.
- The school's own assessment information and reviews of pupils' learning reveal that, where teaching is better, teachers provide work that is suitably matched to pupils' abilities. This helps pupils to make effective progress and achieve well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Pupils are eager to learn and enjoy having a voice in school improvement. However, because teaching is inconsistent, occasionally low-level disruption occurs. This restricts pupils' progress and limits how well they can achieve.
- The attendance of some disadvantaged pupils is lower than average. Although it is improving, the current level of attendance by this group of pupils means that they are not fully able to engage in the education that the school has to offer. This is reflected in their progress, which is not consistently strong. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is above average. However, leaders' work with parents is improving pupils' punctuality and improving the attendance of other pupils.
- Pastoral support, well supported by the work of the inclusion manager, is a particular strength of the school. All adults know pupils and their families well. They form caring and supportive partnerships with pupils, which helps pupils feel valued. Adults have a clear understanding of pupils' challenging and complex needs and are committed to supporting pupils who need additional help. They form effective working partnerships with a range of external agencies, to provide the extra support that pupils and their families need. This is improving some pupils' emotional well-being, attendance and attitudes to learning, which is leading to better progress.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils usually behave well in and out of lessons and, because they are keen to learn, they listen carefully to adults' instructions. Pupils enjoy school and say that they feel

safe. The majority of pupils know what the school expects of their behaviour. As a result, they move around the school in an orderly manner.

- Pupils enjoy the opportunity to socialise and play with their friends at lunchtime and playtime. Adults supervise and engage with pupils effectively. This means that adults intervene swiftly when pupils need their help. This is especially helpful for pupils who need extra support to manage their behaviour.
- Several parents who responded to the online questionnaire shared their concerns about the way that the school manages pupils' behaviour. However, this is not backed up by the views of staff or pupils themselves. The vast majority of children, pupils and staff confirm that behaviour is well managed.
- Pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare. They comment that any problems are quickly dealt with by adults. The school's behaviour records show that leaders' actions are reducing the frequency of unacceptable behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Several pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, have low starting points. Their skills and knowledge are lower than those typical for their age when they join the school. A high proportion of pupils, especially those who speak English as an additional language, arrive in the school at different points during the year.
- Many pupils are behind in their learning and do not catch up quickly enough because teaching does not enable them to make sustained progress in a wide range of subjects.
- Leaders provide extra language support for pupils who speak English as an additional language, which helps them to communicate more effectively. However, teaching does not consistently help pupils to make good progress. As a result, some pupils achieve well, but several pupils do not.
- Many disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are still catching up from previous weak teaching. Therefore, high numbers of pupils are working at standards below those typical for their age.
- Pupils enjoy reading. However, where reading activities are either too difficult or too easy, this limits the progress that pupils are able to make. Where adults' questions help pupils to think hard about what they are reading, they can share their ideas. This is beginning to develop pupils' skills of inference and deduction, which is improving their comprehension.
- A high proportion of pupils achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. Pupils are able to apply their understanding of phonics to spell words and develop their writing.
- Fewer pupils in almost all year groups achieve well in writing, compared with reading and mathematics. This reflects the quality of teaching and restricts how well pupils can develop and embed their writing skills in a range of other subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics helps pupils to apply what they know to reason and solve problems. However, teaching does not consistently support or challenge pupils. For example, some pupils in Year 2 show a good understanding of place value which helps

them to calculate accurately. However, other pupils struggle to partition numbers into tens and ones and this limits how well they achieve.

- In 2018, the proportions of pupils achieving standards appropriate for their age at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 were broadly in line with or just below those of pupils nationally. However, progress and attainment had declined from the previous year. Over the last two years, fewer pupils in either key stage attained high standards compared with pupils nationally.
- Leaders have identified some appropriate areas for improvement. However, reviews of pupils' learning and the school's latest assessment information provide an inconsistent picture of success. Despite the fact that many pupils are making progress, it is not consistently strong.
- Few of the school's most-able pupils make strong progress or have high attainment. This is because they often complete work that is similar to that for pupils with much lower starting points.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Teaching in early years is inconsistent and children's progress is variable because leaders do not set consistently high expectations for children.
- Leaders have identified that teaching in early years needs to improve, but they are unclear how to do this. Consequently, their plans to support early years leaders and staff are vague. This limits how well they can drive improvements.
- The early years leader is new to her role and is still developing her understanding of how to improve provision and teaching. The school has enlisted the support of an external consultant to provide staff with professional development. However, this support is in the early stages and it is too soon to evaluate the impact of this.
- The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development at the end of early years has been just below that of children nationally for the last two years. It declined last year compared with the previous year.
- Teachers in early years do not routinely identify the precise barriers to children's learning. As a result, learning activities do not routinely meet children's needs. This causes children to lose focus and become unsettled so that their progress is not consistently strong.
- Activities for Reception children do not consistently spark children's interests. As a result, children often wander between tasks and are not encouraged to explore, or sustain their concentration. This restricts how well they can practise, develop and embed a range of skills and knowledge across different areas of learning.
- Children in Nursery, including the youngest children, follow routines well. They understand what is expected of them, listen carefully to instructions and respond appropriately. For example, they line up sensibly and help adults to tidy up. Opportunities to develop children's communication and social skills are optimised. For example, during snack time, children are encouraged to share fruit and talk to each other. Adults ask appropriate questions, which prompt children to share their ideas.

- Practical activities that teachers provide for Nursery children promote their enthusiasm for learning. For example, the youngest children enjoy exploring different sounds when beating instruments and kitchen utensils. Questions from adults such as, 'is that a loud sound or a quiet sound?' help children to communicate their understanding of pitch.
- In developing children's communication and language skills in Reception, adults use appropriate questions well to support children's understanding. For example, adults ask children, 'which is heavier?' and 'which is lighter?' when children compare different weights. This helps children to explain their knowledge and understanding using phrases such as, 'I know this is heavier because the balance goes down when I put this on.'

School details

Unique reference number	144500
Local authority	Swindon
Inspection number	10058288

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	481
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Steve Robinson
Principal	Deborah Marklove
Telephone number	01793 523800
Website	https://gorsehill.swindon.sch.uk
Email address	head@gorsehill.swindon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Gorse Hill Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school which includes a Nursery. The school converted to become an academy in 2012. It subsequently joined the White Horse Federation Multi-Academy Trust in April 2016.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is lower than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language is almost double the national average. Several of these pupils arrive at the school at different points in the year.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities or have an education, health or care plan is broadly in line with the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classes, several of which were joint observations with the principal or assistant principal.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, including the regional director of the trust. The lead inspector had a telephone conversation with the chair of governors. Inspectors also held informal discussions with teachers and teaching assistants.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school development plan, the school's latest assessment information relating to attainment and progress, safeguarding records and attendance information.
- Inspectors scrutinised the quality of pupils' work over time. This activity was carried out jointly with the mathematics leader, the writing leader and the early years leader. The headteacher observed part of this.
- An inspector observed adults listening to several readers from different classes.
- A formal meeting was held with a group of pupils to gain their views of the school. Inspectors also spoke informally with a wider group of pupils during lessons, and at break- and lunchtime. Inspectors took account of 22 responses to the online staff survey.
- Inspectors spoke to parents informally at the start and end of the day and took account of the school's latest questionnaire for parents. Inspectors considered 42 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View and 20 additional free-text comments.

Inspection team

Catherine Beeks, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Geraldine Tidy	Ofsted Inspector

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