

# Gorse Ride Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109877
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wokingham Borough Council
<b>Inspection number</b>	310131
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11-12 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Graham Stephens

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

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<b>Type of School</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7-11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	245
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Adrian Mulleady
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sarah Phillips
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 November 2004
<b>School address</b>	Gorse Ride South Finchampstead Wokingham RG40 4JJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01189 732666
<b>Fax number</b>	01189 731553

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<b>Age group</b>	7-11
<b>Inspection Date(s)</b>	11-12 June 2008
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Pupils in this average sized junior school come from a variety of backgrounds. The percentage of pupils who find aspects of English and mathematics challenging is below average. There are fewer pupils for whom English is an additional language than in most schools. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The headteacher was appointed just over two years ago and the deputy head has been in post for approximately a year. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools Award, the Activemark, the Investors in People Award and the NAACE Mark, which relates to the strategic use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

**Grade: 2**

This good school continues to improve under the outstanding leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Although recently appointed, both have had a marked impact by setting out a clear vision for the school's development, which is understood and supported by all staff. Together, they have created an ethos conducive to learning in which pupils feel safe and secure and where they enjoy the many and varied experiences that the school has to offer. As one parent said, 'staff are all highly committed, very enthusiastic and approachable.' Standards are generally above average when pupils enter the school but cohorts do vary year on year. Consistently good teaching ensures that these standards are not only maintained but also improved upon. Pupils who find aspects of English and mathematics challenging make good progress because of the targeted support they receive. Systems to track and monitor the progress of individual pupils are secure, enabling teachers to intervene when necessary to maintain progress. Pupils are currently on track to exceed the school's carefully formulated and challenging targets with many reaching the higher levels and attaining standards that are well above average.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. All staff have created an atmosphere which is supportive and caring. Staff know pupils well and ensure their needs are met in a safe and secure environment. Pupils are very happy and enjoy school, supporting each other in numerous ways. Their attendance is consistently good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They value each others' contributions, care about the environment and respect children from different backgrounds. They have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy life-style, growing their own fruit and vegetables and taking part in plenty of physical exercise.

Teaching and learning is good and often outstanding. Lessons proceed at a good pace and pupils make good progress. Although teachers are skilled at leading the class in evaluating progress at the end of the lesson, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work and that of others against clear success criteria. Consequently, it is not easy for them to set themselves clear and relevant personal targets to further enhance their learning and progress.

The rich curriculum presents numerous opportunities for pupils to work together and apply the skills they are taught. These activities are often directed by teachers but there are fewer opportunities for pupils to take control of their own learning by initiating responses and lines of enquiry. The school continues to refine the curriculum by exploring how areas of learning can be linked together to make lessons even more exciting and relevant to pupils needs. The excellent use of information, communication technology and especially the 'learning platform,' enables pupils to communicate with each other and their teachers, in an exciting and vibrant way that further enhances the bonds within the school community.

All staff share the headteacher's vision and consequently support her well. The needs of the school are accurately prioritised and reflected in its school improvement plan. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and hold the school to account well for the standards achieved. The school has a good capacity to improve.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Give pupils more opportunities to evaluate their own work and that of others against clear success criteria.
- Make better use of individual targets to help pupils understand their own learning and so make better progress.

## Achievement and standards

**Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress in a range of subjects and large numbers attain the higher levels in English, mathematics and science. Pupils strive to meet the high expectations of staff. Pupils' current work and the school's own data show that many are working above the standards for their age. Pupils with learning difficulties relating to English and mathematics also make good progress because work is carefully planned to meet their needs and because of the support they receive, especially from very skilled teaching assistants. Results of national assessments are carefully analysed and the performance of different groups noted. Consequently, the need to further improve pupils' skills in mental mathematics and also the performance of girls in this subject is resulting in improvements in both performance and attitudes. Pupils do well in music and physical education because of the numerous opportunities provided to develop their talents.

## Personal development and well-being

**Grade: 1**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is outstanding. Relationships in the school are a particular strength with all pupils showing respect for each other and all adults. Good attendance, punctuality and excellent behaviour in and out of lessons reflect the high levels of enjoyment by pupils. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep fit and healthy and a high number of them attend extra-curricular activities. Older pupils take on a wide range of responsibilities such as 'playground friends' and 'peer mediators' in a mature manner that contributes very well to the smooth running of the school and the safety of pupils. Responsibilities include the school council and the eco-committee, both of which are very well developed and valued by pupils. One parent said, 'my daughter feels part of a decision-making process, where children take the lead'. Pupils make excellent contributions to local and wider communities through opportunities such as e-mailed messages between Year 3 pupils and French pen friends and the role of 'junior wardens' in the local community. Pupils' mature social and academic skills prepare them well for future economic well-being.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

**Grade: 2**

Teachers plan consistently well. Carefully structured tasks meet the differing needs of the pupils and this is reflected in lessons that engage them successfully and engender an enthusiasm for learning. Pupils cooperate well on set tasks and show a determination to succeed. Adults ask searching questions, deepening pupils' understanding by encouraging them to explain and justify their thinking. Learning objectives are made very clear at the outset although there are too few opportunities for pupils to review their own progress against these objectives and set themselves personal targets to guide their further improvement. Opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to apply their own strategies to solve problems occur but not consistently throughout the school. Behaviour is managed very well and is excellent in lessons. Learning support assistants are skilled in encouraging pupils, who find aspects of reading, writing and mathematics challenging, to persevere and overcome initial difficulties. They seize every opportunity to boost pupils' self-esteem encouraging them to tackle the next challenge with confidence and enthusiasm.

## Curriculum and other activities

**Grade: 2**

The enriched curriculum is good with many strengths including provision for music and ICT. The use of ICT, through the 'Learning Platform,' has improved communication for both pupils and adults and allowed pupils to access and work on aspects of some subjects from home. Pupils experience a good range of visits and visitors. The exceptional range of popular extra-curricular activities makes a very positive contribution to learning. One parent commented, 'extra-curricular activities are superb, both within school (themed days, e.g. Egyptian, exhibitions, etc) and after school'. Changes in planning have strengthened cross-curricular links between subjects and have made learning more relevant, purposeful and enjoyable. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn by following their own lines of enquiry, and becoming independent learners. The curriculum contributes very positively to pupils' personal development as seen, for example, in the sensitive teaching about the Hajj pilgrimage and the positive responses of pupils. Links with other schools, particularly the adjacent infant school, are strong and this ensures smooth transition.

## Care, guidance and support

**Grade: 2**

Adults successfully encourage enjoyment and achievement in pupils' learning. Very good procedures are in place to ensure that pupils feel safe and secure. Pupils are confident that they can seek help and advice from teachers and other adults when they need it. Effective links exist with both parents and outside agencies. Consequently, the school meets the needs of vulnerable pupils, and those who find aspects of their work challenging, well. Pastoral care is a strength of the school and this is reflected in the good progress made by pupils who attend the nurture groups. There are secure systems to track pupils' progress and to offer additional support and challenge when necessary. There is some inconsistency in the academic guidance pupils receive in their books. Even when teachers' written comments give clear advice as to how work can be improved; there is little evidence to show that pupils take notice and respond or that they have time to use the comments to contribute to personal targets for improvement.

## Leadership and management

**Grade: 2**

In a comparatively short space of time, the headteacher and her deputy have successfully engaged all staff in the management process. Thoughts and opinions are valued and consequently all staff have an important role to play in strategic planning. The new senior leadership team is beginning to have a positive impact. It is still early days but already it is successfully overseeing positive changes to both the curriculum and approaches to teaching and learning that have seen more opportunities provided for pupils to apply the skills they are taught. Systems to monitor the impact of these changes are developing well. Systems that monitor the progress of pupils are well established. Achievement against targets is discussed regularly with teachers and remedial action taken if necessary. Subject leaders have a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and have clear priorities for further improvement. Governors hold the school to account for the standards it achieves and support the headteacher well. Resources are deployed effectively. The school represents good value for money.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<b>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</b>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	<b>2</b>
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	<b>1</b>
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interest of learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

All white boxes must be completed. The grey boxes are used wherever the inspection team has sufficient evidence to come to a secure judgement.

<sup>2</sup> IE - denotes that insufficient evidence was available to inspectors for a judgement to be made.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

## Letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection.

26 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gorse Ride Junior School, Wokingham, RG40 4JJ

Thank you for being so polite, friendly and welcoming when we came to visit your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you, talking to you and looking at all your work and the exciting things that you do.

You go to a good school. This is a list of some of the things we liked best.

- You work hard and do well in your work.
- You are very polite and caring of each other.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- Your teachers are very good at planning and are always looking for more interesting things to teach you.
- All the adults in your school make sure that you are really well looked after.
- Your headteacher and the other people who help run your school are doing a good job.

Every school, even one as good as yours, has things that could be improved. We think you need to try even harder to evaluate your own work and think carefully about how you could make it even better. Take more notice of your teachers when they tell you what to do to improve your work. Set yourselves personal targets to improve your work and try very hard to achieve them.

With my very best wishes for your future success.

Yours sincerely

Graham Stephens  
Lead Inspector

