

# Harpole Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121976
<b>Local Authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359135
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alan Jarvis

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

The registered childcare provision, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	204
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Calleran
<b>Headteacher</b>	Terry Mortimer
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 March 2008
<b>School address</b>	Larkhall Lane Northampton NN7 4DP
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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	17–18 November 2010
<b>Inspection number</b>	359135

**Number of children on roll in the registered  
childcare provision**

**Date of last inspection of registered  
childcare provision**

Not previously inspected

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**Age group** 4–11

**Inspection dates** 17–18 November 2010

**Inspection number** 359135

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed eight teachers in 15 classroom visits. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, the headteacher and senior staff responsible for key areas of the school's work. Several informal discussions were held with parents and carers. Inspectors looked at planning, minutes of meetings and other documentation, including that relating to safeguarding and pupils' learning and progress. Questionnaires returned by members of staff, pupils and 69 parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- How quickly do pupils, particularly boys, progress in writing?
- How well does topic work contribute to pupils' learning and enjoyment of school?
- What strengths are there in pupils' personal development?
- How good is pupils' understanding of communities and cultures that are different from their own?

## Information about the school

Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage in this below average sized school. While the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, an above average percentage has a statement of special educational needs. Most of these have moderate learning difficulties, behavioural or autistic needs. There have been several staffing changes in the past two years. The school has International Schools and Activemark awards.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This good school has improved its effectiveness. Pupils' achievement is better because teaching now has a consistently good impact on pupils' progress over time. There are some outstanding features to its work. Pupils feel extremely safe in school because the good safeguarding procedures are enhanced by the excellent way adults listen to and respond to pupils' concerns. Attendance is high because pupils enjoy the curriculum and the school promotes the importance of regular attendance. Pupils' contribution to the school and local community is excellent because pupils rise to the challenges they are given. They are empowered to generate new ideas to make the school better and raise funds for many charities.

Children make a sound start in the Reception class and make satisfactory progress in their learning. Faster progress is limited by the curriculum in the outdoor area which is not as stimulating or as well-resourced as that inside. In addition, not enough attention is given to planning challenging activities outside which are focused on developing individual children's basic skills and capitalising on their individual interests.

In the rest of the school, pupils make good progress and there is a trend of rising attainment. The pupils do especially well in reading and mathematics as a result of the school giving these a high priority. Boys do not do quite as well as the girls in writing. While the gap is closing, boys' writing does not have a sufficiently striking impact on the reader because longer pieces of work sometimes lack imagination and interest. Although improving, there are not enough resources provided to stimulate boys' interests and teachers sometimes miss opportunities to question boys in lessons to help them understand how to improve their writing.

Interesting and varied topic work, such as finding out about 'significant people', is well established and makes a very good contribution to pupils' enjoyment of school. As well as helping them to utilise their information and communication technology (ICT) skills, this enables them to develop good teamwork and research techniques. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their consideration for others and strong relationships. Pupils have a good understanding of how the global community varies, the beliefs of different faiths and ways of life in contrasting communities.

The good outcomes reflect the positive leadership and management of the headteacher and strong drive for improvement of staff responsible for English, mathematics and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The governing body provides a strong lead and has a clear ambition to improve the school's performance. The school has a good capacity for further improvement. This is reflected in important features such as pupils' progress, attendance, how well they feel safe, teaching and the quality of care, support and guidance; all have improved a grade since the last inspection. The school's self-

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evaluation is accurate and staff are sharply focused on tackling the few remaining weaknesses.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By September 2011, raise attainment in boys' writing by:
  - giving more priority to how pupils' writing is structured so as to provide a striking impact to the reader
  - introducing more resources and stimulus geared to boys' interests
  - sharpening teachers' questioning of boys in lessons.
- By September 2011, upgrade the outdoor curriculum in the Reception class so that it is as effective as that indoors by:
  - improving the quality of the outdoor environment and its resources
  - strengthening planning to ensure that all outdoor activities are challenging and provide opportunities for children to develop their basic skills.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment by the end of Year 6 is above average. This is helping to prepare pupils well for secondary school. The school's data, pupils' work and lessons all show that pupils make particularly strong progress in reading and mathematics, but that boys' progress in writing is slower than that of the girls.

Pupils with a statement of special educational needs make good progress because of close support they receive from support assistants who focus sharply on addressing their specific learning needs, encouraging independence in learning. Learning support assistants work in good partnership with the teachers to support pupils with a special educational need and/or disability and others. They use good questioning and well-tailored tasks to ensure that these pupils make good progress.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their experiences in school and show very positive attitudes to learning. For example, in Year 2, pupils worked at a good pace in small groups coming up with a range of interesting questions about the various characters in Little Red Riding Hood. They quickly picked up the need to frame the openings of questions with words such as, 'how', 'why', 'what', and 'when'. In Year 5, pupils worked rapidly when using their problem-solving skills to calculate the perimeters of some irregular shapes. Pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy reading the good selection of books available and benefit from the focused approach to teaching reading. By Year 6, most read accurately and fluently and talk confidently about the characters and plots in the text, predicting what might happen next. Pupils apply their writing skills well in other subjects. For example, in Year 6, pupils had composed newspaper articles and used computer software to produce full-page spreads. They also researched ways to save energy and, together, produced informative and attractive leaflets.

Although a small minority of parents expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour, the inspectors found behaviour to be good and, on occasions, excellent. Pupils are adamant that there is very little bullying and, on the rare occasions someone is picked on, 'staff sort this out very quickly'. Pupils are knowledgeable about healthy lifestyles. This is supported

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by their topic work and visitors from 'Change for Life' who raise awareness of the benefits of regular exercise and good diets. Pupils from a wide range of groups are very keen to contribute to the school, as was evident when hands shot up in an assembly in response to the teacher asking for volunteers to form a school eco-club. The school council and other pupils have a strong voice in which charities to raise funds for, have decided which equipment should be added to the playground and every class gets involved in the local Scarecrow festival.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	1
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers provide pupils with a range of interesting and enjoyable activities that are well matched to their learning needs. In the vast majority of lessons, this results in a good pace to learning. In many lessons, 'Learning Ladders' are used to provide pupils with activities of increasing difficulty which they work through during the course of their learning. This approach is operating well. In a small minority of lessons, the pace slows, either because teacher introductions are too long or not enough opportunities are taken to sharpen boys' learning through carefully focused questioning. Pupils understand their targets well and work on these diligently in lessons. Marking is good. Comments in pupils' books, framed as 'a star and a wish', help them know when they have done well and pinpoint next steps in learning.

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The well-balanced curriculum has a strong emphasis on pupils' basic skills and integrating learning in different subjects through well-designed topic work. It is enhanced by a range of visitors to school and trips to places of interest which the pupils enjoy. French also enriches the curriculum. There is a good emphasis on pupils developing their ICT skills using a range of equipment, especially in Years 3 to 6. Pupils benefit from a good range of other activities such as the allotment and tech clubs, and there is a high take-up rate.

Pupils are known as individuals, and the excellent relationships which exist between adults and pupils ensure pupils' concerns are dealt with very promptly. Links with families and outside agencies ensures the needs of the small number of vulnerable pupils are thoroughly addressed. Staff do all they can for any pupil who has challenging circumstances to enhance their well-being and self-esteem. Measures to improve attendance are extremely successful because term time absence is strongly discouraged.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Against a backcloth of several staff changes, the headteacher has rebuilt his senior leadership team. Good improvements in provision and outcomes are a result of the concerted actions of all staff. Middle leaders have a very clear understanding of where improvements are still to be made, based upon a rigorous analysis of performance data and a range of monitoring activities. Their subject action plans and the school's development plan blend together well. Combined, they contain well-chosen strategies which have had the impact of sustaining a good rate of improvement. Challenging targets and good tracking of pupils' progress are also effective in ensuring the school is on course to enhance academic outcomes.

The governing body discharges its duties effectively and offers constructive challenge to hold the school to account. It is fully involved in drawing up the school development plan and monitoring the success of its implementation. Safeguarding procedures are implemented rigorously. For example, all policies are regularly reviewed and implemented consistently, safe recruiting systems are adhered to and fire drills are undertaken regularly. Good partnerships have been established with other schools and outside agencies which contribute well to pupils' good achievement and providing good staff development.

Equality of opportunity is promoted successfully. The teachers use performance data to ensure that all groups do as well as they can. As a result, the gap in attainment in writing between boys and girls has already narrowed considerably and pupils of all abilities make good progress in both key stages. The school promotes community cohesion effectively



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locally and is further extending the beneficial links that have been developed with a number of other schools in contrasting locations in this country and abroad. Parents and carers are kept well informed of their children's progress and, in turn, they provide good support to the school. For example, their views have fully been taken into account in revising the school's Charter, anti-bullying policy and disability equalities scheme.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress from typically expected level skills when they start school. By the start of Year 1, their attainment in the Early Learning Goals is broadly average, although children's skills in communication, language and literacy, particularly in early writing, are a weaker element. Children are looked after well, their behaviour is good and robust attention is given to their welfare and safety. Indoor learning is well organised. The pupils enjoy, for example, using their imagination in the role play area, investigating floating and sinking, using the computer and developing their fine motor skills. Teaching is satisfactory and, on occasions, good, especially when pupils are encouraged to work independently and make choices. Planning for outdoor activities is not as detailed as that for indoor learning and, as a result, the outdoor area is underused. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory and there is a sound action plan for improvement.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

## Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents are happy with their child's experiences at school. They are particularly pleased about how much their children enjoy school, how safe they feel, the good teaching and the good progress they are making in their learning. Inspectors endorse these views. A very small minority of parents do not think that the school is well led and managed. Inspection findings confirm that the headteacher and other staff have improved the school's effectiveness since the last inspection. A very small minority of parents were also unhappy with behaviour, but the inspectors found behaviour to be good. No instances of misbehaviour were seen in lessons and the slightest inattention was quickly tackled.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harpole Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 204 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	64	23	33	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	41	59	27	39	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	29	39	57	7	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	32	42	61	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	39	35	51	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	38	41	59	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	26	51	74	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	21	30	36	52	6	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	28	45	65	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	33	30	43	8	12	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	22	40	58	7	10	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	14	20	40	58	10	14	3	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	39	40	58	2	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



19 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Harpole Primary School, Northampton, NN7 4DP**

Thank you for making us so welcome to your school. We enjoyed talking with you, looking at your work and listening to Year 6 readers. We found out that you go to a good school. Here is a list of some of the things we liked best.

At the end of Year 6, attainment is above the national expectations. You attain best in reading and mathematics.

Your contribution to the work of the school and wider community is excellent.

Your attendance is high and reflects your enjoyment of school.

Topic work is varied, interesting and helps you develop your creativity.

Adults in the school care for you extremely well and that means that you feel very safe in school.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the good support they receive.

The headteacher, senior staff and the governing body have improved the school since the last inspection and have good plans for further development.

Every school has some things that could be improved. These are the two areas we want your school to concentrate on now:

To raise the attainment of boys' writing so that it is as good as that of the girls. The boys can help by ensuring that your 'big writing' is well composed and interests people who read it.

To ensure outdoor learning in the Reception class is as good as that inside.

I wish you great success in the future. Keep up all the good work you are doing!

Yours sincerely

Alan Jarvis

Lead inspector

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