

Hardwick Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122999
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	359341
Inspection dates	21–22 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Bernie Wegerhoff
Headteacher	Julie Hawkin
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seventeen lessons and observed seven teachers. They held meetings with representatives of the governing body, parents, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring such as lesson observations, and analyses of pupils' work and other assessment information. Inspectors scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 44 parents and carers, and by staff.

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

- What the school is doing to raise attainment in writing, especially for boys, and whether pupils' progress is good enough.
- What the school is doing to ensure that all teaching is at least consistently good.
- The impact of the new leadership team on promoting improvement and raising attainment from very low levels.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language has risen to above average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is high. The governing body manages a children's centre on the site, which is subject to a separate inspection.

Since the last inspection, a major building project has provided new classrooms and offices.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to raising attainment, improving the quality of teaching, raising attendance and increasing the impact of leaders and managers at all levels on driving improvement.

Hardwick has been through a long period of change and uncertainty, during which a major building project has taken place and the governing body has taken over the running of the children's centre that is located on the site. There have been frequent changes in staffing and in the leadership team. Throughout this period, attainment has been very low in reading, writing and mathematics and the school has failed to make any inroads into securing significant or lasting improvement. The leadership team has been strengthened by two new appointments in the past year. This has resulted in an increase in the proportion of teaching that is consistently good. Consequently, the progress of some groups of pupils has accelerated. However, although teaching across the school is satisfactory, too many pupils, while making generally satisfactory progress, do not make sufficient gains in their learning to raise their levels of attainment.

Pupils' personal development is good and they behave well. Pupils are polite and considerate to one another, and are keen to learn, showing great enthusiasm and engagement when the teaching is good. They have a good understanding of making healthy choices and know how to keep safe. Pupils make a valuable contribution to the life of the school, for example as play leaders and school councillors, and are involved in the wider community, taking part in 'Banbury in Bloom'. The school cares for pupils well, especially those who may be vulnerable, and positive relationships are a key feature of the school's work.

The staff team fully supports the headteacher's desire to increase the pace of improvement, and is taking action to bring this about. Teachers have refined how they use data with the support of the local authority. This has helped them to develop a greater understanding of how pupils are performing, and those who are at risk of underachieving. Timely interventions are giving pupils a chance to catch up on ground lost in the past, and some individuals are making good progress. Poor attendance acts as a barrier to accelerating progress, because absent pupils fail to benefit from the school's improving provision.

The school's self-evaluation has been too generous in the past, but more rigorous monitoring is helping leaders and managers to form more realistic views of the school's performance and to take action accordingly. Leaders have been successful in eliminating

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inadequate teaching in the past year, although too much teaching lacks sufficient pace to be better than satisfactory. Planning does not always take account of the needs of more-able pupils, who are sometimes insufficiently challenged. Opportunities are missed to use questioning to stimulate lively debate and make pupils think imaginatively. The governing body in particular, has recognised that it became too preoccupied with the building project and the children's centre. As a result, it did not hold senior leaders sufficiently to account for their lack of impact in raising attainment over time. Recent appointments to the leadership team have increased the momentum for change. Evidence of more rapid progress for some groups of pupils as a result of improvements to teaching, reflect the school's satisfactory capacity to secure further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at least to equal national expectations for each year group by December 2011, by:
 - developing pupils' speaking skills and extending their vocabulary
 - ensuring themes for writing motivate boys.
- Improve teaching so that all of it is at least consistently good by July 2011, by:
 - injecting pace into lessons so that they engage and interest all pupils
 - sufficiently challenging all pupils, especially the more-able, so that they make good or better progress
 - using questioning to probe pupils' thinking and elicit extended responses.
- Increase the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring the governing body fully holds the headteacher and other senior leaders and managers to account
 - ensuring self-evaluation of teaching and learning is accurate, based on systematic and rigorous monitoring at all levels.
- Improve attendance, at least to equal the national average by December 2011, by:
 - highlighting to parents the importance of good attendance.
 - refining systems to promote attendance and reduce absence

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Pupils enjoy their learning particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 6, where teaching is consistently good, and tackle challenges with enthusiasm. For example, a group of pupils in Year 6 made good progress solving division problems with number lines, as the work was matched well to their abilities and the teacher provided clear explanations and good support. While there are flashes of inspiration elsewhere, too much teaching is dull and uninspiring, with too much teacher talk, which prevents pupils from applying themselves to their tasks. ♦

Children join the Reception year with skills and abilities well below those expected, especially in language and communication. They get off to a good start because of the good provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, but the pace of progress slows and

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becomes more sporadic in Key Stage 1 and the lower part of Key Stage 2. Attainment remains too low, and overall achievement inadequate, because the predominantly satisfactory teaching does not enable pupils to make the very rapid progress necessary to match national expectations. Nonetheless, there have been some improvements in mathematics in the past year because of the impact of a whole-school focus on problem-solving. The pace of progress accelerates in the upper part of Key Stage 2, with particular impact in Year 6. The many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same satisfactory progress as other pupils, although targets on their individual education plans are sometimes not challenging enough. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive appropriate support to make sound progress. More-able pupils do not always fulfil their potential because work is often too easy for them. In 2010, for example, no one attained the higher Level 5 in English out of a cohort of 33 pupils.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, as they work and play harmoniously together and reach out to their community, for example dedicating their harvest festival to local elderly residents and singing for them at Christmas. Pupils have submitted their ideas about how they would like a new play area to look and made suggestions for improving their experience of school, such as requesting water fountains for the playground. Pupils are not sufficiently prepared for the next stage of their education because they do not acquire sufficient basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

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How effective is the provision?

Teachers make clear to pupils what they are to learn, and often involve them in setting the criteria by which they will know if their learning has been successful. However, sometimes teachers are too willing to accept criteria that are insufficiently related to the original learning intention, like 'use capital letters and full stops'. While there is plenty of teacher talk, it does not always elicit interested and extended responses from pupils because questioning is too narrow and limited. In the most successful lessons, teachers have a good understanding of how each individual pupil is doing and set clear targets that show pupils how to improve. At other times, pupils are unclear about what they have to do and how they can do better. Marking is variable, with good guidance in some classes, but little help in others. The curriculum is changing for the better, with more opportunities for pupils to engage in lively and exciting activities. For example, pupils explored a woodland area and were inspired to write about the environment. Year 2 pupils made an excellent animation based upon a well-known monster story, creating all the characters and backdrops themselves, and adding the voice track and music. This kind of work is, however, at an early stage so that, at times, the curriculum is still somewhat uninspiring and unchallenging. A satisfactory range of clubs and trips is available for pupils to enjoy.

The school cares well for its pupils, particularly those who may be vulnerable, and puts in place a good range of support to cater for individual needs. Its work with families is effective in helping pupils facing difficulties to overcome them. Measures to improve attendance, despite being rigorous, have not had sufficient impact.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership team has a clear vision for increasing the momentum of improvement which all staff support. There is greater stability among senior leaders with key new appointments, which is helping to drive improvement forward. ♦A more rigorous approach to analysing data and holding teachers accountable for pupils' progress, enables more pupils to make good progress than before. Systems to measure and analyse the progress of different groups of pupils are becoming increasingly sophisticated. Although pupils are making satisfactory progress, this is not sufficient to fully counteract past underachievement. Leaders have begun to tackle remaining weaknesses in teaching, but this action is not systematic or rigorous enough. The governing body's effectiveness in providing challenge and support is improving, and is now satisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the school's work, and help out in a variety of different ways.

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The extent to which the school promotes equality is satisfactory, with some progress in narrowing the gap between boys' and girls' attainment. All pupils are included well, and the very occasional incidents of racist behaviour are dealt with robustly. Good safeguarding procedures and policies ensure pupils are kept safe, with detailed records kept and all staff training up to date. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily, having a good understanding of its local context, and forming links with schools elsewhere in the United Kingdom and in India. Because outcomes are inadequate, the school does not provide sufficient value for money.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into their new accommodation, finding much to interest and excite them in the wide variety of imaginative activities available. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has created an attractive and stimulating learning environment, with all resources accessible to children and much to fire their natural curiosity. The youngest children are among the most engaged in the school because of the consistently good quality provision they receive. From low starting points they make good progress and learn quickly to cooperate and take turns, and to sustain their concentration, for example in blowing up inflatable numbers.

Children benefit from a spacious and exciting outdoor area, really enjoying rolling barrels down the steep slope to see how fast they will go. This outdoor area is being developed further to provide an all-weather safe surface and more challenging climbing equipment. Assessment is good, but sometimes staff do not extend children's thinking sufficiently by asking open-ended questions or encouraging them to practise speaking at every opportunity. Good leadership has knitted a close team of practitioners who provide good care and support to the children.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A relatively small number of questionnaires were returned, most of which were positive. All parents and carers who responded said that their children enjoyed school. Most believe the school keeps their children safe, helps their children to lead healthy lifestyles and that teaching is good. ♦ Inspectors judged the quality of teaching to be satisfactory but found that too much teaching lacks pace. A few parents and carers have reservations about their children's progress, particularly that of the more-able. Inspectors found that more able pupils were often not sufficiently challenged. A very small minority of parents and carers query the quality of the school's leadership and management. While inspectors found the capacity of leaders and managers to bring about further improvement satisfactory, they did identify some weaknesses in aspects of leadership and management.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hardwick 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 44 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 199 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	59	16	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	57	15	34	4	9	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	57	12	27	3	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	20	45	17	39	3	7	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	24	55	16	36	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	61	13	30	4	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	23	52	17	39	2	5	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)	17	39	20	45	5	11	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	17	39	21	48	6	14	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	20	45	16	36	1	2	4	9
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	43	18	41	3	7	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	20	45	18	41	3	7	2	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	25	57	15	34	4	9	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). 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



23 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hardwick Primary School, Banbury, OX16 1XE

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school, and for helping by telling us your views. Although there are lots of positive things about your school it has been given a 'notice to improve' because it is not doing as well as it should in some very important areas. ♦ As a result, you do not all do as well as you could, and some of you find the work too easy.

These are some of the best things we found out about your school.

- You have a good understanding about how to be healthy.
- You say you feel safe at school.
- You behave well and you are always willing to help others.
- The school cares for you well, especially if you are going through difficulties.
- The youngest children get off to a good start at school.

These are the four main things we have asked your school to improve.

- Make sure you do much better in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Make sure all the teaching is at least good.
- Make sure the school's leaders and the governing body check how things are going, and ask the right questions if things are not going well.
- Make sure you come to school when you should.

You can help your school by telling your teachers how well you think you are doing and by asking your parents and carers to make sure you come to school every day.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead inspector

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