

Harpley CofE VC Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121092
Local Authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	358925
Inspection dates	14–15 February 2011
Reporting inspector	Colin Henderson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	47
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanne Getley
Headteacher	Ann Beardall
Date of previous school inspection	25 April 2008
School address	School Lane Harpley, King's Lynn PE31 6DY
Telephone number	01485 520274
Fax number	01485 520274
Email address	office@harpley.norfolk.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	14–15 February 2011
Inspection number	358925

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by an additional inspector. He observed six lessons involving three teachers and six teaching assistants. Meetings were held with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school improvement and development plan, self-evaluation form, tracking data, minutes of governors' meetings and local authority reports. He also analysed 27 questionnaires from parents and carers, 33 from pupils and 10 from staff.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at a number of key areas.

He explored how successful staff are in improving pupils' weaknesses in writing.

- He investigated how well the school tracks pupils' progress and how staff use assessments to target areas for improvement.
- He looked at how well the staff and governors focus on raising attainment.
- He explored pupils' knowledge and understanding of people's lives in communities other than their own.

Information about the school

This is a small school. Pupils come from the villages of Harpley and Houghton and almost 50% come from outside of the immediate area. An above-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Pupil mobility (the proportion of pupils leaving or joining between Reception Year and Year 6) is high. The school has achieved Healthy Schools' status and is part of the Litcham Learning Community.

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

Harpley School has improved since the last inspection and is a good school. The headteacher, staff and governors have developed a strong team approach that instils a sense of belonging and a family atmosphere within a vibrant school community. This is valued highly by parents and carers as illustrated by the many positive comments, such as the following description of the school by a parent: 'a special school, run with heartfelt passion by both the staff and the community to provide a friendly and caring learning ethos'. Teaching has improved to a consistently good level across the school. The close partnership between teachers and teaching assistants is a key feature of the school's success. The progress of every pupil is closely tracked, and they benefit from consistently good support and guidance in lessons that help them to achieve well. Pupils clearly enjoy their learning, as reflected by their high attendance. Their excellent behaviour ensures that they focus diligently on their work.

Pupils' achievement is good, and standards have risen, for example, in mathematics and reading, to above-average levels. Standards in writing are improving, although not as quickly as in other areas. The introduction of writing targets is beginning to improve pupils' understanding of what they need to improve. These are not embedded in practice for the older pupils. Pupils enjoy the range of cross-curricular topics, although these do not always provide sufficient opportunities, especially for more able pupils, to extend their writing skills. The effective teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is particularly successful in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff know each individual and have a good understanding of their particular needs. They provide effective guidance to help them to make good progress and attain well compared to similar pupils nationally.

Children settle quickly and happily into Class 1. They really enjoy being with the older pupils from Year 1 and Year 2, and the rate of progress of some of the more-able children is stimulated by their awareness of what the older ones are doing. Outdoor provision has improved. Although the current building improvements limit some free-flow between activities, staff plan carefully to minimise their impact and maintain a good outdoor programme. The school has an outstanding partnership with parents and carers that contributes greatly to their children's learning and to improving the school, for example by raising significant funds through the centenary appeal to extend the building.

Teachers use assessments carefully to match activities to the range of abilities within the mixed-age and mixed-ability classes. They make good use of interesting resources to stimulate learning and use questions effectively to encourage pupils to contribute their ideas. They do not consistently use more-challenging questions to extend more-able pupils, for example, when looking to develop the use of more-exciting words and phrases in their writing.

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

The headteacher continues to provide enthusiastic and purposeful leadership both in promoting good classroom practice and in targeting areas for improvement. The strong collaborative approach encourages all staff and governors to contribute successfully to improving the school. A detailed and effective tracking system enables the school to set realistic yet challenging targets and to amend these where there is a high level of change in the small year groups. A good governing body has improved its procedures to provide an accurate check on how well the school is doing and give a clear direction to its work. As a result, standards are rising. The school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - embedding the use of writing targets for junior pupils
 - providing more opportunities for pupils, particularly the more able, to extend their skills across the curriculum.
- Develop teachers' use of questions to challenge more-able pupils consistently to extend their skills and knowledge.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress in lessons because of good teaching, their desire to learn and the high-quality support they receive from staff and other pupils. Everyone seeks to do as well as they can and to help those who find learning difficult. Careful marking and helpful one-to-one guidance encourage each pupil to achieve well. Attainment on entry to Reception Year varies from year to year as numbers are small. It broadly meets national expectations. Although attainment varies between the small year groups, it has improved over the last three years to above-average levels by Year 6, particularly in mathematics and science. However, the proportion of pupils attaining above the nationally expected levels in writing is below the national average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. They benefit particularly from an early assessment of their specific needs and targeted support from experienced and well-trained teaching assistants. The high proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals achieve well and attain above average standards when compared to similar groups nationally.

Many parents commented how their children really enjoy coming to school. Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in lessons and throughout the day. Relationships are excellent and older pupils take great care in ensuring that younger ones are happy, for example, at break and lunch-times. Pupils feel safe and adopt healthy lifestyles, for example, through their weekly swimming sessions. They contribute their ideas to improving the school through the school council, and good links with the local community encourage them to contribute their ideas, for example, through reports in the parish newsletter. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, especially for social and moral aspects. Their knowledge and understanding of other cultures are less secure, although enhanced through curriculum topics, visitors and visits, for example to celebrate the Chinese new year.

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

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
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

How effective is the provision?

Lessons are planned well to include a good range of activities that are matched to the wide range of abilities. Good organisation and control ensure that a brisk pace is maintained in lessons. Teachers use interesting resources well, for example, junior pupils were very interested to watch a video clip about life in Egypt. Teachers use questions well to encourage pupils to contribute their views, for example, when describing the Egyptian landscape. Sometimes, teachers use follow-up questions to encourage pupils to provide more-detailed answers, although this is not a consistent feature. Opportunities are missed to challenge more-able pupils to extend their skills and knowledge and attain higher standards.

The curriculum offers a good range of interesting activities and is enhanced well by visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs. Good use is made of a topic approach, supported by discrete teaching of specific literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum is enriched well by themed weeks and days, such as an arts week and a music day. Strong links with the Litcham Learning Community and other local organisations are used to enhance pupils' knowledge and skills, for example, in a good range of sports.

The good care and support provided for each pupil reflect the school's ethos and are key factors in helping them enjoy school and encouraging them to try hard. They are valued highly by parents and carers; one commented that, 'the staff are unfailingly helpful and ambitious for our daughter. She, in return, is very happy and progressing better than we

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

could have hoped.' The high-quality care for any pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable ensures that they are closely monitored. Any interventions are quickly put in place, sometimes with the help of the Parent Support Adviser, to ensure that they are safe and continue to make progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher continues to lead the school effectively. Combining her management role with a high level of classroom teaching, she provides a positive and energetic influence that encourages all members of the school community to contribute to making the school better. Their willingness to share ideas and good practice has improved teaching and pupils' achievement. Self-evaluation procedures, some of which are informal, are effective and provide clear points for development. Some aspects are not always rigorous enough to ensure that the positive impact of good teaching on pupils' achievement is fully recognised. Governors have improved these evaluation procedures and plan to extend them further.

The school is successful in tackling any discrimination. It promotes equal opportunities satisfactorily, although more-able pupils are not always challenged enough in some lessons. It has an outstanding partnership with parents and carers which contributes successfully to their children's learning. Safeguarding procedures are good, reflecting the school's own self-evaluation, with clear policies in place meeting all current requirements. Staff are suitably trained in child protection, and there are good systems for recording any concerns. The school is successful in promoting cohesion within the school and local communities, for example, working with the local village to redevelop the village play area. Pupils' knowledge of other global communities is enhanced by visiting speakers, for example, a NATO speaker on Darfur.

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

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The small number of Reception Year children make good progress because teaching is good. The headteacher and the teacher who share teaching the class, together with the teaching assistants, plan carefully together to ensure a well-organised programme of activities. By the time they move into Year 1, most children attain above-average levels. Staff devise a programme to include all required areas of learning and use frequent and ongoing assessments to track children's progress and plan for their further development. The balance between adult-directed and child-initiated activities is good, although, during one lesson observed, too much time was spent on starter activities rather than ensuring that the children were quickly and purposefully involved. There is a strong sense of teamwork in Class I involving all staff and pupils. The youngest children benefit from consistently high-quality care and grow in self-confidence as a result. The good induction process and the friendly, caring atmosphere are valued highly by parents and carers.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account: 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

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

Views of parents and carers

A large majority of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Almost all were very positive about the school. They particularly value the good teaching and its friendly, caring, family-like environment, which helps their children to feel safe and enjoy school. A small number of parents and carers are concerned that the school does not take note of their concerns and suggestions. The inspector judged that the school has an excellent partnership with parents and carers and is anxious to listen to and act upon parental concerns. A parent noted that the school uses a wide range of sources, such as text, email and letters to gain parents' and carers' views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harpley CofE VC 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 inspector received 27 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 47 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	63	10	37	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	23	85	4	15	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	17	63	8	30	2	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	67	9	33	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	85	4	15	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	63	8	30	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	78	6	22	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)	18	67	8	30	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	78	4	15	2	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	78	6	22	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	59	8	30	3	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	23	85	2	7	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	23	85	4	15	0	0	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



16 February 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harpley CofE VC Primary School, King's Lynn, PE31 6DY

I would like to thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently. After talking with you about what you do and hearing your views, looking at your work, watching you learn, and talking to your teachers, I have judged that your school is good.

I was pleased to see how well you get on together and you are proud of your school. As your behaviour is excellent, teachers can get on with the job of helping you learn. You are all making good progress in your lessons. This is because your teachers make lessons interesting and you try hard to do what they ask. They ask questions to encourage you to put forward your ideas in lessons, and we have asked them to make these questions more challenging for those of you who can learn quickly.

It was interesting to talk to some of you about your school and how you enjoy your work, especially the interesting topics and the good range of visits and visitors. You said that you enjoy your topic work and I have asked your teachers to provide you with more opportunities to develop your writing skills in your topics.

You are keen to improve your achievement. Teachers are using different ways to let you know how you can improve, such as giving you targets in mathematics. I have asked your teacher in Class J to develop further the use of improvement targets in literacy. Please use these targets and try hard to make your work even better.

Thank you again for helping me to find out about your school and I hope that you will continue to be happy and to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Colin Henderson

Lead Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.