

Harwell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number123062Local AuthorityOxfordshireInspection number359354

Inspection dates17–18 March 2011Reporting inspectorStephen Lake

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 162

Appropriate authority The governing body

ChairLynn WilkinsonHeadteacherPeter CansellDate of previous school inspection18 March 2011

School address The Styles

Oxfordshire OX11 0LH

 Telephone number
 01235835337

 Fax number
 01235835337

Email address head.2563@harwell.oxon.sch.uk

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	17–18 March 2011
Inspection number	359354

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

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons or parts of lessons seeing seven teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and staff. A sample of parents and carers were spoken to at the start of the day. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at its self-evaluation form and improvement plan. They also looked at records on pupils' attainment and progress and documents relating to vulnerable pupils. The questionnaires completed by staff, pupils and 82 parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics, especially at Key Stage 2, to determine if teaching is challenging enough.
- The provision in the curriculum for the development of writing and mathematical skills.
- The achievement of boys, especially in communication, language and literacy, in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The impact of revised assessment procedures.
- The effectiveness of the strategies for school improvement.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school serving mainly its immediate surrounding area. The proportion of pupils who leave and enter the school other than at the normal time is well above average, especially in Years 3 to 6 where almost half of the pupils change. This is a significant change since the last inspection. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and a few pupils are at an early stage of speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is below average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the proportion with a statement of special educational needs are both above average. Pupils' identified needs include specific and moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behaviour difficulties, and particularly speech, language and communication difficulties. There is a privately run after-school provision on site which was not inspected as part of this inspection.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. Its priorities to enhance pupils' creativity and personal development are reflected by the good quality outcomes in these areas; in particular, the very high quality art work, the outstanding community cohesion and pupils' excellent contribution to the community. Attendance is high. Good-quality care, guidance and support ensure a secure welcoming environment in which pupils feel safe. Pupils behave well and have a good understanding of how to stay safe and keep fit and healthy. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Safeguarding arrangements are good. Strong partnerships with external agencies provide valuable additional support for vulnerable pupils and the very large number of pupils who join or leave at other than at the normal times. Parents and carers are kept very well informed and closely involved in their children's learning.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and improving. Children make satisfactory progress throughout the school including in the Early Years Foundation Stage. A temporary fall in attainment and progress has been reversed, especially at Year 2, although attainment remains average by the end of Year 6. Progress is improving, particularly in writing due to changes to the curriculum which are providing stimulating experiences and opportunities to promote writing skills. Although some teaching is good it is satisfactory overall and not yet consistent enough to accelerate progress rapidly and raise attainment further. Information on how well pupils are progressing is used appropriately to plan work that challenges most pupils, but there are some inconsistencies across the school. • As a result, some pupils have work that is too hard for them and others are not challenged enough. In some lessons teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of pupils' work are not high enough. Pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities make consistently better progress than their peers because of the high levels of very well targeted support they receive. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, further progress is limited because the outdoor area is not used effectively enough to promote learning. Opportunities are also sometimes missed to promote children's speaking and listening skills throughout their activities. •

School self-evaluation is accurate and the governing body is suitably involved in the process. The information gained is used to set out strategies for improvement in the school development plan. Nevertheless, its effectiveness is limited because new systems for analysing pupils' performance are not yet firmly embedded or detailed enough to provide clear information for leaders and governors to compare the school's performance against national indicators. In addition, the monitoring of teaching and learning is not rigorous enough to bring about the significant improvements required. As a result, although the governing body supports the school well, neither it nor senior leaders have

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

sufficiently detailed information on the performance of different cohorts or whole-school performance. The strengths of the previous inspection have been maintained and action is already in place to address areas for improvement noted in this report. This indicates a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement.

• Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching and learning to 75% by April 2012 in order to improve pupils' achievement by:
 - improving the way assessment information is used to plan lessons that challenge all pupils
 - ensuring that all teachers have high expectations of the quality and quantity of work that pupils can produce, especially in writing and mathematics
 - ensuring rigorous and systematic monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Embed the use of the revised systems for analysing data on pupils' attainment and progress by September 2011 to provide the governing body and senior leaders with a more sophisticated analysis that compares performance with the results of national assessments more rigorously.
- Improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage to ensure that:
 - more opportunities are provided to develop speaking and listening across all areas of learning.
 - more effective use is made of the outdoor area

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are keen to learn. They are particularly enthused by the many opportunities to develop their creative skills in art and music. Children currently start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills in line with those normally found at that age, although communication, language and literacy skills are lower. This is a significant change after a number of years when skills on entry were much lower. In addition, the high turnover of pupils since the last inspection has resulted in lower attainment at Year 6. School data show that those who are present in the school for the whole of their school career make better progress and attain slightly more highly than those who join part-way through. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve challenging but realistic targets from very low starting points. This reflects the steady improvement taking place, especially in writing which has been a school focus, although less improvement is noticeable in mathematics. In a good English lesson observed, pupils made good progress as they refined a piece of writing in the style of an Aboriginal 'Dreamtime' story because tasks were matched well to their needs. The teacher provided stimulating activities that resulted in all sharing their ideas and learning effectively from each other. Nevertheless, in some lessons across the school, not enough attention is given to matching work closely to the differing abilities of pupils. Excellent examples of art

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

in the style of Bridget Riley and M C Esher were observed during the inspection. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of the high-quality support from capable teaching assistants and good partnerships with external agencies.

Pupils say there is little bullying in the school and they trust teachers and other adults to deal effectively with any that might occur. They undertake a wide range of responsibilities such as school council representatives and 'Sports Leaders'. Younger pupils are very involved in the 'Full Circle' project which involves pupils lunching with older members of the local community on Fridays and then spending part of the lunchtime sharing activities such as crafts and learning from each other. This activity has won national recognition and also makes a huge contribution to community cohesion. The valuable personal skills gained through these activities, together with pupils' sound basic skills, including information and communication technology (ICT) skills, help prepare them satisfactorily for their future lives. Pupils have a curiosity about the world about them and show empathy for others. They support those less fortunate than themselves such as sponsoring the education of a child in Tanzania. They clearly know right from wrong and show respect for themselves and others. Pupils have a good understanding of cultures in other parts of the world through their many international links. Their social skills are impressive and contribute very well to the harmonious atmosphere in the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	2
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	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make good use of ICT to stimulate and motivate learning. Many are skilled at asking the right questions to make pupils reflect upon what they are learning. In most classes, marking makes it clear to pupils how to improve their work. Improved systems for assessing how well pupils are learning are starting to be used effectively to plan challenging lessons that focus on the next steps in learning. Nevertheless, these activities are not consistent across the school. In a small but significant proportion of lessons, teachers' expectations of the quality and quantity of work that pupils can produce are too low and marking is not rigorous enough. These factors limit further improvements in learning.

The improved curriculum makes good use of the local environment to support learning. For example, in a good science lesson, the school grounds were used well in an activity to demonstrate how different animals need to see in different ways. Due to stimulating activities and well-targeted teaching, the vast majority of pupils understood that a mouse, for instance, needs to be able to see more upwards to avoid birds of prey. However, the development of mathematics across the curriculum is not yet embedded as well. Partnerships with other local schools provide good opportunities for sport. Those pupils identified as gifted and talented are supported appropriately through links with other local schools and universities. The many after-school sports clubs and the developing school garden make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of how to stay fit and healthy.

Pastoral care is strong. Child protection procedures are detailed, well known to all staff and made readily available for temporary staff and visitors through the staff handbook. The additional needs of those pupils deemed vulnerable are met well. Good support for parents and carers, especially those of pupils moving into the school, has enabled an improvement to take place in rates of attendance.

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		
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2	

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership of the headteacher has developed in all staff an ambition to improve the school and raise standards. The headteacher has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching. However, the quality of monitoring of teaching and learning, including that by other managers and subject leaders, is not sufficiently systematic or focused enough upon key priorities. This is a key factor contributing to the inconsistencies noted in teaching and learning. Suitable priorities set out in the school improvement plan include clear success criteria, but the precise detail of what will be done and by when is

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

not clear enough. This makes it harder for senior leaders and the governing body to judge its effectiveness. The school takes suitable steps to ensure equality of opportunity and prevent discrimination. There is satisfactory monitoring to check on the effectiveness of these measures. However, whilst pupils with special needs achieve well the progress of most groups of pupils remains satisfactory.

Regular training for staff and governors and close monitoring by the governing body ensure safeguarding requirements are met well. The supportive governing body has effective procedures and strategies for obtaining the views of parents and carers. Senior leaders and governors, however, do not yet make sufficient use of data to judge school and the performance of different groups. A new system for recording information on pupils' attainment and progress contains a wealth of data that are useful on an individual pupil basis. Analysis of data to enable cohort or school performance to be compared with schools nationally is not sophisticated enough. This prevents the governing body from being rigorous enough in holding the school to account.

There is an excellent understanding of the background of pupils and very strong strategies to develop their understanding of community cohesion. The school's actions have a significant impact upon community cohesion. The impact of actions is evaluated and strengths are built upon to promote further improvement. Very strong local links, a highly cohesive school community and an impressive range of links with other areas and countries reflect the high-quality work in this area of school life.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement		
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	2	
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination		
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2	
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion		
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money		

Early Years Foundation Stage

Well-established routines help children get a secure start to their education. The school has developed strong links with parents and carers and with the local nursery and pre-

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

schools. This enables a smooth and secure start to schooling. The strong teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants ensures that the welfare and needs of the children are met well. Teachers and other adults usually ensure a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for children to learn through purposeful play. Leaders have acted effectively to address a drop in children's communication, language and literacy skills, especially for boys. Progress in this area is much improved as result. Nevertheless, too few opportunities are planned for children to practise their speaking and listening skills across all areas of learning. This is preventing attainment from improving further. Children's personal and social development is a strength of the provision. They start Year 1 soundly prepared for learning. Children make good use of the outdoor area, but activities outside are not always closely enough linked to those inside to provide opportunities for making independent choices on where to learn. Suitable systems for checking on children's progress are in place but these are not yet always used consistently to challenge children to achieve more highly.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

An above average number of parents and carers returned the questionnaire and around a third of those chose to add written comments. The vast majority of these were positive. Typical of the written comments was 'My child is very happy at school. It is a friendly and stimulating place to be.' A few parents and carers were concerned that suggestions are not acted upon. A few of those writing comments were concerned with consistency of progress through the school. Inspectors are unable to comment on any suggestions made as they do not know what these were. Inspection evidence confirms that progress is satisfactory but there are some inconsistencies.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harwell 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 82 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 162 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	72	22	27	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	67	26	32	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	39	48	40	49	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	43	52	34	41	1	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	46	56	34	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	46	42	51	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	60	32	39	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)	43	52	29	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	52	36	44	2	2	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	50	33	40	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	48	37	41	5	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	59	32	39	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	56	68	25	30	1	1	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)						
Type of school	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	l 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: 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.

■ 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.



21 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harwell Primary School, Harwell OX11 0HX

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to visit you. We enjoyed talking with you about your school. You behave well and look after each other well.

Yours is a satisfactory school that is improving after a small drop in standards. You reach standards similar to those attained in most schools. Your attendance is high.

Here are some other things that we liked about your school.

- You make an outstanding contribution to your school and the local community and have an excellent understanding of how to get on with other people locally and in other countries.
- You thoroughly enjoy learning because of the good-quality creative curriculum.
- The school looks after you well and makes sure that you are safe and have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves stay safe.
- You have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy.
- There are good links with your parents and carers and with other schools and organisations that all help your learning.

To help your school continue improving, we have asked the headteacher and the governing body to:

- improve the amount of good teaching so that you all learn better, with teachers using the information that they have on you to plan work that challenges all of you, and making sure that you produce high-quality work
- ensure that better use is made of the outdoor area and more opportunities are provided to develop speaking and listening skills for younger children
- improve the way they organise and analyse the information on your progress so that the teachers and the governing body know how well the whole school is doing.

All of you can help by telling your teachers how hard or easy you find the work set for you.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Lake

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.