

Halberton Primary School

Church Path, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 7AT

Inspection dates 13–14 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress is not consistently strong – some pupils do not make the progress that is expected nationally because the rate of learning in lessons is not always rapid.
- Teaching requires improvement – the work teachers give pupils is not always at the right level and teachers sometimes miss opportunities to involve pupils.
- When pupils are not engaged by the work, they lose concentration, so their behaviour stops being good.
- The activities put out for children in Reception to choose for themselves are not linked closely enough to what the teacher wants them to learn.
- Leadership and management require improvement – there are not enough permanent teachers to share the leadership responsibilities.
- Some small adjustments are needed to the way the school checks if the things it does are working.

The school has the following strengths:

- The headteacher has the full support of staff, one of whom wrote, 'She sets the highest standards in her approach to everything.'
- The headteacher and members of the governing body have recognised previous weaknesses in the school's work and are taking effective steps to improve it. Some pupils already make good progress.
- Pupils are learning to read well, and can match sounds to letters effectively.
- Teachers and other adults teach small groups well.
- Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for.
- Behaviour is mostly good and the school has helped some individual pupils to behave much better.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by one inspector. She observed eight lessons or part lessons and also made a series of short visits to guided reading groups, which included the teaching of phonics (the links between sounds and letters). She also listened to some pupils reading.
- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher, teachers and some support staff, and with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor. She had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. She met a sample of Year 6 pupils to gather their views, and gathered views more informally from other pupils in the playground.
- The inspector analysed the 16 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire about the school on Parent View, a section of the Ofsted website. She also talked to some parents and carers when they collected their children.
- She studied a range of documentation, including the school development plan, data about pupils' progress and information about observations of teaching and management of performance. She analysed the responses of eight staff to an Ofsted questionnaire.

Inspection team

Deborah Zachary, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average primary school. On 1 September 2012 it became part of a cooperative trust with other local schools. It retains its own governing body and headteacher.
- There have been major staff changes since the last inspection. The headteacher took up her post in January 2012, and at the time of the inspection two of the three classes were taught by temporary staff.
- There has also been significant building work since the last inspection.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average. The proportions supported at school action (11%) and at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs (5%), are not significantly different from the national averages.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (extra money provided to schools by the government) is below average at 10%.
- There is a pre-school on the same site, but it is not managed by the school's governing body.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by:
 - taking every opportunity to involve pupils actively during lessons, for example through the use of discussion partners
 - ensuring that the work given to groups who are working independently is at the right level to engage them
 - monitoring the learning of pupils working independently as well as those in focus groups
 - targeting the equipment and play materials put out for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage more closely towards the day's learning objectives.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that responsibilities are appropriately delegated to middle leaders and they are held accountable for their areas, once permanent staff are appointed
 - fine-tuning the evaluation of the impact of strategies the school has used to improve the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter the school with a range of abilities, but they are broadly at the levels expected nationally for their age. Although typically they keep pace with their peers in other schools and leave Halberton adequately prepared for the next stage of their education, a few do not make the progress that is expected nationally.
- Pupils' learning slows when pupils are trying to do independent work that is too difficult, or when they have to sit and listen rather than engaging in the work themselves. These are some of the key reasons why their progress is not yet good.
- Achievement requires improvement at all stages in the school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are enjoying the new outdoor learning area, but staff sometimes miss opportunities to build on their progress. They learn well when they receive direct teaching from the teacher or assistant, but the equipment put out for them to use in the activities they choose for themselves, while interesting, is not specially selected to help them extend what they have just learned.
- Records of progress show that some pupils currently in the school have had a period of slower progress but are now making up lost ground.
- In lessons, pupils usually listen to teachers and assistants, and get down to work willingly. They can reflect and listen to each other's views. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils had a lively debate about whether it was cruel or justified to put worms in a wormery.
- Pupils show good skills in phonics and are making good progress in reading, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are suitably supported and challenged, so they make similar progress to others in the school. In this small school, their needs are well known to staff, who take a consistent approach in helping them to succeed.
- Pupils who are lagging behind in their work, including those known to be eligible for the pupil premium, are closely monitored and identified for specific interventions. The school evaluates the short-term impact of such interventions as a whole, and can demonstrate that good progress results for most pupils who receive them. It does not evaluate the specific impact on pupils known to be eligible for the premium, although long-term progress records show that there is no significant difference between the achievement of these pupils and that of other groups.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Challenges and changes concerning staffing have made it more difficult to establish consistently good teaching. Nevertheless, staff now show an understanding of the lesson principles and teaching policies the school wants to follow.
- Much of the teaching follows a pattern of introduction, groupwork, then a plenary in which ideas are reviewed and drawn together. In the groupwork session, teachers focus on a target set of pupils that changes through the week while other pupils continue with work they have been given, either independently or with support from a teaching assistant. This is often effective but requires improvement when the independent work does not match pupils' needs well enough.
- There was some good practice in a Year 5/6 lesson on writing instructions. Here, some less-able pupils were provided with prompts about words they might use, so they could get on with their work independently. As a result, they made good progress. However, in some lessons, less-able pupils found the work they were given too hard.
- In work with target groups, teachers and assistants usually question well to probe

understanding and give clear instructions. The pupils in the target groups learn well as a result. Sometimes, however, teachers do not check frequently enough on the progress of pupils who are not in the target group, so they do not find out when the activity is not working and do not change it.

- Opportunities are sometimes missed to ensure everyone is actively engaged when work is introduced to the class. Sometimes pupils sit and listen too long with only one answering at a time, when they could all be engaged, for example by being asked to briefly talk about the question in pairs.
- Teachers usually choose lesson content and resources well to interest and stimulate pupils. Content is linked well to work in other subjects, for example when a historic figure was used for a character study in English.
- Phonics are taught well. Even in their first full week of school, children were learning to recognise syllables and initial sounds, thoroughly enjoying clapping along to words with a teaching assistant. Reading records are used effectively to communicate between home and school, and to record pupils' skills.
- At this stage of the year, there was little work and marking in books, but pupils were adamant that they understood how well they were doing and how to improve, and gave the inspector some good examples.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- Many aspects of pupils' behaviour are good, but behaviour requires improvement because good learning habits are not yet consistently established. Classrooms are orderly but some pupils do quickly lose concentration and interest when they meet difficulties or work does not meet their needs.
- Pupils are not all fully in the habit of taking responsibility for working. For example, in a lesson in which they were given clues about a character, they were initially stimulated, but then some pupils sat and watched others do the recording and make the decisions.
- The school's approach to encouraging positive behaviour is working. For example, in a lesson for Reception children, the teacher painstakingly praised any positives, carefully making good sitting and listening a condition for being chosen to help. As a result, attention dramatically improved for a few children who were finding concentration hard.
- Parents and carers, and staff, are very clear that behaviour has improved over the last two terms, a view that is supported by visiting professionals. The responses to the Parent View questionnaire were entirely positive about behaviour and safety, but in an independently conducted parental questionnaire in 2011, 19% were dissatisfied. Behaviour logs show that incidents are now few.
- In discussion, pupils said bullying was currently not a problem and pupils got on well. They were broadly aware of the different types of bullying, but as yet have had limited opportunities to reflect on this. The school has firm plans to provide specific work this term to extend awareness of bullying and how to resist it. It has also rightly planned to widen pupils' responsibilities, for example as playground helpers.
- Pupils feel safe at school and understand how to keep themselves safe in most situations. Attendance is above average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because they have not yet led to securely good teaching. Nevertheless, the headteacher has had a significant positive impact on both teaching and behaviour since her arrival. The local authority has provided effective support for

the headteacher in these improvements.

- Other than the headteacher, there is only one full-time permanent teacher. The school is in the process of advertising and interviewing for two vacancies. This means that currently few responsibilities are delegated to middle leaders, and so middle management is not able to play a high-profile part in leadership.
- The monitoring of teaching is robust, although reliant on the headteacher rather than other staff. Teachers are given clear points for improvement where needed and these are followed up appropriately. Suitable training broadens teachers' skills and improves their practice.
- The curriculum is well organised and enriched by a broad range of activities such as visits, challenges, residential trips, musical performances, clubs and experiences such as French Café day. These support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as well as their academic work. The school gives good attention to the development of reading skills.
- The school has closely tracked pupils' performance for the last year, and its self-evaluation is rigorous. The availability of this data about pupils' performance means that most strategies are now systematically evaluated.
- Evaluation of the effectiveness of individual strategies for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is more patchy. As a result, the school does not have the analysis to fine-tune strategies in the short term. Because the impact of interventions is not separately evaluated for pupils known to be entitled to the pupil premium, the school cannot specifically evaluate value for money in the targeted use of the funds.
- Nevertheless, the school is very aware of the pupils who might be disadvantaged or who have barriers to overcome. It promotes equality effectively.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - members of the governing body have a high level of understanding of the school's situation, the quality of teaching and the current progress pupils are making
 - they have worked effectively to improve the school's accommodation and fulfil the required points for action from the previous inspection report
 - they systematically challenge the headteacher and provide her with effective and sensitive support
 - their impact on teaching and achievement has been limited by the challenges and changes concerning staffing.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113338
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	401361

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	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carol Onley-Gregson
Headteacher	Helen Eversett
Date of previous school inspection	12–13 May 2010
Telephone number	01884 820585
Fax number	N/a
Email address	admin@halberton-primary.devon.sch.uk

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