

Great Harwood Primary School

Rushton Street, Great Harwood, Blackburn, Lancashire, BB6 7JQ

Inspection dates 10–11 October 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		Good	2
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

- Soon after the last inspection, staff turnover and changes of leadership slowed the rate of improvement.
- Teaching does not promote good achievement over time because it does not always match learning to pupils' needs. Work is too easy for some and too hard for others.
- Progress slows where teachers' explanations are overlong and their questions are insufficiently probing. Marking is good in some classes but does not help pupils to improve in others.
- Older pupils' reading comprehension skills are often too weak. Reading has recently improved in Year 2 but gains made are insecure.
- Progress in writing is held up by poor handwriting, spelling and punctuation. At Key Stage 2, too many pupils cannot write at length in English and other subjects.
- Progress in mathematics requires improvement because pupils struggle to apply what they know to solve problems. Many find it difficult to remember key number facts.
- The management of improving teachers' performance has had too little impact in promoting good teaching over time. Some school leaders are new to post and are still developing the skills of checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their subjects. The governing body has not provided enough challenge to school leaders about why pupils do not make good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher has invigorated the school and gives a strong lead. Everyone pulls together. Staff and governors are eager to improve quickly.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in this calm and orderly school.
- Clear priorities for improvement are agreed and ways to check the progress made in achieving these are firmly in place. There is some good teaching and teachers want to engage in training to improve learning. Consequently the school has the capacity to improve.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in each class and made a judgement about the teaching in 17 lessons. In addition, they observed groups taught by teaching assistants and observed breaks and lunchtimes. The headteacher conducted one joint observation with an inspector.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff, members of the governing body and representatives from Lancashire local authority.
- Inspectors took into account ten responses from parents to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View. They met some parents informally at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors heard pupils read in Year 1 and Year 6. They also observed lessons where reading was being taught and so had further opportunity to talk to pupils about their reading.
- Inspectors met with two groups of pupils to gather their views about the school. They also looked at the responses from the school's own survey of pupils' views.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents including the improvement plan, the school's analysis of its performance and data tracking the progress of pupils.

Inspection team

David Law, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Zahid Aziz

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school has seen significant changes of staff since the last inspection, particularly in leadership positions. The headteacher started at the school in September 2012. There were temporary headship arrangements for the whole of the last school year. During this period the school had the support of associate headteachers from another school. The local authority has also provided additional support over the last school year.
- Great Harwood Primary is an average size primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs through school action is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above average. Nearly half of pupils is of Pakistani heritage and most of the remaining half is White British. However, there is a number of pupils from Eastern Europe and this proportion is increasing.
- The school meets the government's floor standards (these are the minimum standards and rate of progress expected of primary pupils).

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so it is good or better by:
 - matching learning securely to pupils' different needs
 - ensuring that teachers' explanations and introductions to lessons allow pupils time to think and explain their ideas
 - developing teachers' use of questions to probe pupils' understanding
 - ensuring that marking consistently shows pupils how they can improve and reach their targets.
- Improve pupils' progress and raise achievement in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that pupils systematically acquire key skills in handwriting, spelling and punctuation
 - improving progress in early reading skills by teaching pupils to draw on a wide range of strategies and helping older pupils to read with greater understanding
 - teaching pupils at Key Stage 2 to use their writing skills across the curriculum and helping them to write progressively lengthier pieces in a range of styles
 - providing opportunity for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge so they can solve problems well
 - ensuring that pupils can recall key number facts quickly.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - supporting some newly appointed subject/middle leaders to develop their skills for checking the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in their subjects
 - developing ways in which the governing body is able to hold senior leaders to account for pupils' progress and the quality of teaching
 - checking the performance of teachers carefully to help improve teaching.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and understanding below those typical for their age. They settle quickly to routines and play well together, making most progress in the Reception class. On entry to Year 1 however, standards of attainment remain below those expected at this age, especially in language skills.
- Pupils show positive attitudes to learning throughout Key Stage 1 but rates of progress vary depending on the quality of teaching. Where teaching is strongest, currently in the mixed Years 1 and 2 class and in Year 2, they make good progress. However, weaknesses in past teaching have left gaps in knowledge and skills that mean pupils need to catch up.
- The 2012 reading assessments at the end of Year 2 showed improvement after a decline of three years. Pupils systematically use their knowledge of letters and sounds (phonics) to help them read unfamiliar words but they are not adept at using other strategies and this restricts their progress.
- At Key Stage 2, pupils often try their best but variations in teaching quality mean that good progress in some classes is offset by insufficient progress in others. Progress is currently best in Year 6. In 2012, school data show an improvement in Year 6 attainment to broadly average.
- Reading at Key Stage 2 is stronger than writing. In Year 6, more pupils reach the higher Level 5 in reading than they do in writing. However, a significant minority reads with insufficient understanding.
- Pupils' progress in writing at Key Stage 2 is hindered by poor spelling, punctuation and handwriting. Some pupils find it difficult to write longer pieces both in English and other subjects which particularly impedes progress as they get older.
- Pupils often enjoy mathematics but good progress is hampered when they find it difficult to recall key facts such as multiplication tables. Pupils' books show there is too little opportunity to use and apply mathematical skills and develop the ability to solve problems.
- Some pupils with special educational needs make good progress when they get support in small groups but there are variations when the quality of teaching falls below good.
- There are no differences between the progress of White British and Pakistani pupils. Boys often achieve less well than girls in both reading and writing, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.
- The gap between pupils in receipt of pupil premium and others is narrower in this school than it is nationally because the school has used the funding wisely.
- When given the opportunity, pupils are eager to talk about their learning but where teachers' explanations and introductions are overlong they have too little chance to do this. Pupils enjoy learning from practical activities, for example when Years 1 and 2 pupils used rulers to measure interesting objects like toy dinosaurs.
- Despite improved teaching in the school currently, which is striving to fill gaps in pupils' previous learning, achievement requires improvement to enable it to be good.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- In all classes, teachers have good relationships with pupils, skilfully manage behaviour and are supported well by teaching assistants. Good teaching is seen in Year 6, the Reception class, Year 2 and the mixed Years 1 and 2 class.
- Where teaching is strongest, it promotes brisk learning. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils made rapid progress when learning about shapes because expectations were high and mathematics subject knowledge strong.
- Where teaching is less effective, time is not used well and pupils spend too long listening to teachers talking to them, especially during their explanations and introductions to lessons. On these occasions, pupils have too little opportunity to share their ideas and teaching is not skilful

enough in questioning pupils to probe their understanding.

- In some lessons, learning does not meet the full range of pupils' needs and work is either too easy or too difficult. This restricts progress, for example for lower-attaining pupils, when they struggle to write because their spelling and punctuation are weak.
- Pupils at Key Stage 1 enjoy learning about letters and sounds and this is often taught well within what are brief but lively and interactive sessions. This contributed to the improvement in Year 2 reading assessments in 2012, but too many pupils are not confident in using a range of other reading strategies.
- The marking of books is completed regularly. In the best examples, marking often refers to the lesson objectives, to pupils' personal targets and pupils are shown how to improve. However, these good practices are not used consistently and as a result many pupils are unsure of what they need to improve or what their personal targets are.
- Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage is accurately based on close observation of children learning. Parents very much enjoy the portfolios of children's work that are shared with them.
- Pupils say they get on well with their teachers. Parents say that their children are taught well although they would like more information about their child's progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite and friendly. They remark how well those from different backgrounds get on together. Pupils respect each other and are tolerant and helpful. They work and play well together in their classrooms and around the school.
- Behaviour in lessons is invariably good. Pupils try their best and listen carefully to their teachers. At lunchtimes, pupils are well-mannered and chat sensibly at the dining tables. At playtimes, they behave well and line up in an orderly fashion to come back into school.
- Pupils say they feel entirely safe in school and parents express confidence in the school's ability to keep them safe. Pupils have a basic awareness of how to keep safe, for example when using the Internet, but their broader understanding of how to keep safe in various situations is limited.
- Pupils say bullying is rare and are confident that adults will sort out any issues. A few parents say there is some bullying and it is not always dealt with. School documentation shows that there are no recorded racist incidents and exclusions are low. Name-calling is rare and pupils say it does not happen because of someone's race, disability or religion.
- The school is an orderly and happy place and pupils are looked after well. Vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs are supported well in their personal and emotional development.
- Attendance is average and has improved consistently over the last three years because of effective action by the school. There is little persistent absence because school leaders tackle it firmly.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Following the last inspection, staff turnover and changes of leadership slowed the rate of improvement. Gains are now being made more quickly and there is a sense of urgency from all leaders and the governing body.
- The new headteacher has invigorated the school and provides a strong lead. She has successfully enlisted the support of leaders at all levels.
- The headteacher has reviewed senior leadership roles and redefined their responsibilities so senior leaders are now clearer about their job. There is good morale amongst staff, who are keen to engage in training to improve their teaching and to do the best they can for pupils.

- A thorough analysis has been made of what needs to improve and a clear list of priorities drawn up.
 - School leaders, with the support of the local authority, have recently taken concerted action to improve teaching. This is having a positive impact, for example through more relevant training, but there is not yet enough good or better teaching. Performance management is only just starting to be established properly and is yet to be rigorously applied for it to make a significant impact. Consequently, this is why pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching are judged as requiring improvement, rather than good.
 - Meetings are planned to review how well pupils are doing and to improve teaching.
 - Systems to monitor and evaluate achievement and teaching are in place. For example, there is now a relevant system to track pupils' progress and information from this is shared between staff. However, some leaders are more skilled than others in interpreting and acting on this self-evaluation. For example, middle leaders, responsible for English and mathematics, although ambitious to acquire further skills, are new to their responsibilities.
 - Leaders and managers have established effective procedures to ensure that pupils are cared for well and safeguarding meets current requirements.
 - Pupils get on well together and there are appropriate systems to tackle discrimination so all have equal opportunity to learn. The school is pinpointing any underachievement across various groups of pupils and acting on it. For example, pupil premium funding is used appropriately to provide support where it is needed.
 - Pupils say how much they enjoy visits to places of interest and the opportunity to play sport. The curriculum is sufficiently broad but is not always matched well to the needs of different pupils and continuity in learning is impaired because teaching is not yet good.
 - Parents say they have concerns about staff turnover and want more information about how to help with their children's learning. School leaders are keen to involve parents more and inform them better about how their children are doing.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - has been strategic in successfully seeing through the headship appointment and other staff changes
 - is better informed about pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching but is still too reliant on what senior leaders say
 - is committed to pupil welfare
 - is now acting with urgency to raise achievement.
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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	119162
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	405835

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	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Pam Russo
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Ault
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2011
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