

Harriers Ground Community Primary School

Harriers View, Bloxham Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX16 9JW

Inspection dates 14–15 November 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

- Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection have resulted in pupils not making enough progress particularly in their writing and mathematics.
- In mathematics, pupils' problem-solving skills are not developed well enough. In writing, pupils' use of grammar is underdeveloped and there are too few opportunities for them to write longer pieces of work.
- There has been too little challenge for more able pupils and this has resulted in too few pupils gaining the higher levels of attainment at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6.
- In some lessons learning is not quick enough because teachers spend too long introducing lessons. In addition, planning has provided too few opportunities for pupils to practise their information and communication technology skills.
- The school's plan for improvement is not sharp enough to be a useful tool to move teaching and learning forward.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting headteacher has taken swift and decisive action to halt underachievement. She has made a strong start to strengthening teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and learning. They feel safe, behave well and have positive attitudes.
- By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are secure and confident and have high self-esteem.
- Progress in the Reception class is good and children achieve well because the provision is of good quality.
- Good provision is made to support the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This results in pupils' well-developed personal and social skills.
- All the staff and governors are determined and committed to the school's further improvement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with a half-day's notice.
- Inspectors observed 18 lessons taught by 13 members of staff. Of these, four were joint observations undertaken with the acting headteacher and both deputy headteachers.
- The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body and with groups of pupils. In addition to a number of meetings with members of staff, the questionnaires completed by the staff were taken into account. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- As well as informal discussions with parents and carers at the beginning of the school day, a meeting was held with parents and carers. Account was also taken of the views of the 26 parents and carers who completed the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation including the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school's improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation, leaders' monitoring of teaching reports and pupils' work.

Inspection team

Keith Sadler, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Fiona Robinson

Additional Inspector

David Westall

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Harriers Ground is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and there are a few from minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, the additional funding provided for looked-after children and pupils known to be entitled to free school meals, is average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also average.
- The school meets the current floor standards set by the government, which determine the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has had an acting headteacher from April 2012 following the departure of the previous headteacher. The acting headteacher is seconded to the school from a local primary school that is part of the Aspirations Academies Trust chain. Harriers Ground is to convert to academy status with effect from 1 February 2013 and will also become part of the Aspirations Academies Trust chain.
- The school is increasing in size from a one- to two-form entry primary school. Currently, there are two classes in each of Years Reception to 3 inclusive and there is one class for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lift the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - teachers do not spend too long introducing lessons and so reduce the pace of learning
 - work set is challenging for all groups of pupils
 - teachers' plans provide more opportunities for pupils to practise their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in lessons.
- Raise standards in writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - more opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their mathematical problem-solving skills
 - pupils' skills in grammar are improved
 - more opportunities are provided for pupils to write extended pieces
 - more pupils gain the higher levels of attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that the school's improvement plan provides sufficient information about the steps the school will take to move towards meeting its targets.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because although children make good progress in the Reception year, this same good progress does not continue consistently throughout the school.
- Children enter the Reception classes with skills and abilities that are below expected levels, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Their good progress is the result of good provision, particularly the teaching. In consequence, most children reach the expected levels on entry to Year 1.
- Progress is too variable. Progress in mathematics is much weaker in Years 1 and 2 than in English because pupils struggle with their calculation skills. At both Year 2 and Year 6, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels is limited. For example, in 2012 none of the Year 2 pupils gained the higher level in writing. This is because the work has been too easy for the more able pupils.
- Progress continues to be inconsistent in Years 3 to 6. As in Years 1 and 2, this is partly due to inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. In some classes, pupils make inadequate progress, particularly in writing. In others, especially in Year 6, progress is rapid and it is good. In consequence, attainment, although improving, has not been strong enough. Nonetheless, attainment in reading was above average in 2012.
- In all year groups, the best progress is made in reading. Most pupils show a keen interest in books. Revisions to the teaching of early reading skills have boosted achievement and these are now taught well. By the end of Year 1, the large majority of pupils have a good knowledge of how to link together letters and the sounds they make to read simple words. By the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils gaining the expected level in reading is above average and most pupils are avid readers.
- Across the school, mainly in writing and mathematics, more able pupils do not achieve as well as expected because the work set for them is not demanding enough. In consequence, although the progress of lower and middle ability pupils matches the national expectation, fewer more able pupils make expected progress. This is because in mathematics pupils are not given enough opportunities for problem solving. In writing, sentence structure and grammar are not sufficiently well developed. In addition, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. This is because there are now good systems in place to identify pupils with additional needs and suitable programmes are put into place. This is also the case for pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- Close attention has been paid to pupils who receive additional funding. Their progress has been strengthened by one-to-one teaching, particularly in the Reception classes. In other year groups, additional teaching for small-group support in reading, writing and mathematics has boosted their progress.
- There have been recent improvements. Inspection findings confirm school data that progress across the school has accelerated in the last six months. This is because new senior leaders have improved teaching and eliminated inadequate teaching. Since this time, progress in both English and mathematics has strengthened in all year groups.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not been strong enough to promote good achievement. In the minority of lessons that require improvement, the pace of learning is slowed because teachers either spend too long introducing topics or are easily distracted by a few pupils who are not giving their full attention. Work is not always matched closely enough to pupils' abilities and work set is

sometimes too hard. On the other hand, work is not hard enough to stretch and secure strong progress for more able pupils.

- Even though some teachers make good use of the new information and communication technology resources, too much of the planning misses opportunities for pupils to practise these skills.
- Nonetheless, there are improvements. Weaknesses have been tackled well by senior leaders and there are positive features across the school. For example, pupils are managed well and relationships are good which results in all classrooms having a calm and purposeful atmosphere. In the best lessons, planning is thorough and work is matched well to needs.
- The teaching of reading is good. In Years 1 and 2, pupils benefit from good quality teaching. Work is targeted well to meet the needs of the pupils. This was seen in a good quality Year 2 session when the teacher was presenting pupils with some tricky sentences to prepare. They enjoyed tackling this demanding work and were able to apply skills they had learnt so that they made good progress. Reading continues to be taught well in Years 3 to 6. Changes to the teaching of group reading, for example, means that there is now a consistency of approach across these years.
- Marking is now outstanding due to the good programme of teacher training. Teachers invariably provide detailed and clear information about how well pupils have done. In addition, their comments are related well both to the work set and also to pupils' individual targets for improvement which are set out in the front of their literacy and numeracy books.
- Recent changes in the arrangements for the teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs have improved provision. Systems have been refined so that one-to-one and small-group support is now targeted well. Teaching, both by skilled teaching assistants and teaching staff, has improved. The arrangements for teaching pupils who speak English as an additional language have been reviewed and are similarly effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well in lessons and they have positive attitudes to both school and learning. Their behaviour is equally good around the school. This was evident as they walked sensibly, chatted politely to the inspectors and enjoyed playing together during break times.
- Attendance has improved to average levels. This is partly due to a review of the authorisation of term-time holiday requests.
- Pupils new to the country and entering the school speaking no English say that they are made welcome and the school's buddying system helped them to settle quickly and well into the routines of school.
- A clear behaviour policy is consistently used by the staff so that behaviour is well managed. Most parents and carers agree that pupils are well behaved. School records confirm that pupils' behaviour is good on a daily basis and is improving over time.
- Almost all parents and carers who responded to Parent View say that their children are happy at school and are kept safe. Pupils agree. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and healthy. For example, younger pupils know about road safety. Older pupils say that they enjoy the regular visitors that help them to understanding safety, including keeping safe when using personal computers at home.
- Pupils say bullying hardly ever happens at school and they know what to do if they are bullied. They have a good understanding of the different types of bullying. School information confirms that there have been very few episodes of pupils being excluded. Although a small minority of parents and carers said that the school does not deal effectively with bullying, discussions with other parents and carers and the review of each case logged show that these arrangements are robust and managed well.

The leadership and management **require improvement**

- Since the last inspection, leadership and management have not been sufficiently effective in lifting the school's overall effectiveness to good. Management systems, including the checking of provision and pupils' progress, have not been sufficiently robust and staff have not been held to account for underachievement.
- The acting headteacher, supported well by the senior leadership team, has made a good start. She has introduced a wide range of systems and structures to strengthen leadership and management. She has tackled underperformance in teaching firmly and effectively and this has lifted the quality of teaching.
- Senior staff have a full and accurate picture of the school's provision. Improvements in the use of data mean that pupils' progress can be tracked effectively. However, the resulting improvement plan, although tackling the right priorities, is not a useful tool for moving the school forward because there is a lack of clarity about what steps the school will go through in meeting targets.
- New arrangements for the management of teachers' performance are effective. These are now closely linked to pay awards and pupils' achievement. All staff have agreed targets that will help them to improve their teaching.
- The school teaches an appropriate range of subjects. The recent emphasis on strengthening planning for literacy and numeracy is starting to pay dividends as progress speeds up. Even so, there remain too few opportunities for pupils to write longer pieces of work and teachers do not always plan writing into other subjects.
- Pupils' personal development is supported well through the effective personal and social programme. Pupils say that they enjoy going on visits, which enlivens their learning. Year 6 pupils, for example, said that their visit to Aynho woods helped them in their writing when following the 'Midnight Fox' theme.
- The school is committed to equal opportunities and tackling discrimination. It fosters good relationships with parents, carers and other agencies.
- The local authority's support has been mixed. Recent adviser support has been effective. However, the overall impact of advisory support since the last inspection has been hampered by regular changes in personnel. Other support, for example over health and safety and safeguarding issues has been good. However, that provided for personnel matters has not been helpful.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and understands how well the school is doing in relation to similar schools. For example, governors are aware that more able pupils are not making enough progress in writing. They also know about weaknesses in teaching and have supported the acting headteacher's work in overcoming them. They know about the use of performance management and what is being done to reward good teachers and about salary progression and promotion issues. New members of the governing body receive induction training to support their understanding of the role. Other regular training includes whole governing body training such as the recent event on inspection. Governors also attend staff training days. Governors have ensured that the budget is managed well and they understand the value of spending decisions and the impact these have on pupils' progress. For example, they are keenly aware that pupil premium spending has had a positive impact on provision for children in the Reception unit. Governors ensure that regulatory requirements, including those for safeguarding, are met in full.

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	112992
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	406127

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	290
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amy Willson
Headteacher	Vicki McLean
Date of previous school inspection	29–30 September 2010
Telephone number	01295 263067
Fax number	01295 263068
Email address	head.2053@harriers-ground.oxon.sch.uk

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