

Harlands Primary School

Mallard Drive, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 5PW

Inspection dates

4–5 June 2013

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

- Achievement is not yet good. Too few pupils make more than expected progress from their starting points or reach the higher levels, particularly in writing and mathematics. There have been gaps in pupils' learning, and assessment information is not used effectively enough by teachers at an individual level to note these gaps and remedy them effectively.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good. Although improvements have been made, teaching requires further improvement in the quality of marking, questioning and sharing good practice.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for less-able pupils but, at present, not enough for more-able pupils.
- Although the governing body understands the strengths and areas for development in the school, it does not gather enough information of its own in order to challenge the school's leaders more effectively.
- Leaders have not been able to ensure there has been sufficient improvement in the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress from their starting points and achieve well as a result of consistently good teaching.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher give a very clear direction. Despite staff changes, actions taken by the school to eliminate underachievement and improve the quality of teaching have more recently begun to prove successful.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are keen to learn, and have good relationships with each other and adults in the school. They behave well, enjoy their lessons and say they feel very safe in school.
- Attendance is above average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed only eight lessons as the school held its sports day on one of the inspection days. Other brief visits were made to activities led by teachers and trained assistants.
- Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils, and a telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority.
- All workbooks from Year 2 and Year 6, for English and mathematics, were analysed and a group of pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read to inspectors.
- Inspectors took account of 22 questionnaires completed by staff and 66 responses to the online Parent View survey.
- Inspectors looked at a range of evidence, including monitoring records, the school's own data on pupils' progress, the school's plans for development, policies and records relating to safeguarding, attendance records and other records relating to exclusions and behaviour incidents. It also looked at the governing body minutes and records of visits made by the local authority.

Inspection team

Gavin Jones, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Vant

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Its numbers are increasing steadily.
- It has provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Nursery managed by the governors and a Reception class.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and hardly any pupils speak English as an additional language.
- Currently, only 44% of pupils are girls, which is well below the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, supported through school action, is average, while the proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils for looked after children, pupils eligible for free school meals or children of service families, is below the national average. At this school, it applies to pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection there have been several changes in staffing, with two staff on maternity leave, one newly qualified teacher appointed and two part-time teachers appointed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so none requires improvement and all teaching is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that teachers regularly question pupils to find out how well they are learning and whether teaching needs to be adjusted
 - sharing more widely the good practice that illustrates high expectations and in engaging pupils more effectively in learning
 - ensuring there is more consistency in marking and that pupils have regular opportunities to respond to the comments made in teachers' marking.
- Accelerate progress in writing and mathematics, so that more pupils reach the higher Level 3 and Level 5 by:
 - improving the identification of previous and current gaps in pupils' knowledge as shown in tests and by making adjustments in planning accordingly
 - making better use of assessment information to make learning even more specific to the needs of individual pupils
 - ensuring that teaching assistants are used more evenly in supporting both the less- and more-able pupils
 - providing better opportunities for pupils in Key Stage 1 to use their writing skills across different subjects and by using fewer worksheets.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - developing the role of subject leaders in driving forwards improvement in their subjects
 - ensuring governors seek for themselves information about the school's provision to help them to better hold the school to account.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Progress in Key Stage 1 is not fast enough, because by the time pupils enter Key Stage 2, they remain at average levels of attainment, with standards in writing and mathematics not showing sufficient pupils reaching the higher Level 3.
- The proportion of pupils at Key Stage 2 attaining above the expected levels for their age in English and mathematics has not been high enough as expectations were not high enough. The school has revised targets to much higher levels. This is beginning to result in better progress. There is still evidence of pupils having gaps in their previous learning, especially in mathematics, which the school is endeavouring to overcome in order to raise standards further.
- Children enter the Nursery with levels of knowledge, skills and understanding below those expected for their age. They make good progress because of good teaching and transfer to the Reception class with over half having reached expected levels. Further good teaching in the Reception class ensures that children enter Year 1 with average attainment. The restructuring of the Early Years Foundation Stage has supported its current success.
- Evidence from lessons shows that as teaching improves, progress is more often judged as good during lessons. This is further supported by the scrutiny of workbooks in Year 6, showing that more recently progress is improving and attainment is average.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make the expected progress. Their needs have been clearly established and interventions are put in place effectively by teaching assistants.
- Pupil premium funding is used to support eligible pupils with additional time with special assistants, sometimes on a one-to-one basis. As a result, the gap between these pupils and all others is closing, especially in reading. However, the gaps in attainment in writing and mathematics show that these pupils are a term behind other pupils.
- Pupils are clear about their targets and know how well they are doing in lessons, as they regularly have to fill in simple charts in their books, noting how they think they are succeeding.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching in most of the school lacks consistency. During the inspection, the range of teaching seen ranged from that which requires improvement to outstanding. In Key Stage 1, teaching is not regularly good and results in only the expected progress being made. This is particularly the case for more-able pupils. It is only recently that some improvements have been made. Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is consistently good and results in children making good progress.
- At Key Stage 2, teaching is equally inconsistent, although there is more good or better teaching. An outstanding lesson in upper Key Stage 2 engaged all pupils as the lesson was fun, exciting and stimulating. The lesson had good pace which kept all pupils motivated. The class teacher showed high expectations of what pupils might achieve and they rewarded her excellent teaching with excellent responses, as pupils researched various forms of film-making techniques. Some other lessons lack this type of engagement. These positive features of teaching which exhibit high expectations are not shared well enough with all teachers.
- There are still some weaknesses in the quality of marking. Although marking has improved and is carried out very regularly, it does not always help pupils to see what their next steps in learning might be. Pupils are not regularly given time or help to respond to the comments in the teachers' marking.
- In good lessons, such as a mathematical lesson in lower Key Stage 2, the teacher's questioning played a significant part in checking the progress that pupils made. By the end of the lesson, each table was able to feedback its results to the class, resulting in spontaneous applause as pupils recognised their successes in line with their targets for the lesson.

- In some other lessons, the progress that pupils make is not checked regularly, and lesson planning and activities are not always then adjusted to take account of how well pupils are learning. Although this issue has been raised by school leaders in meetings with teachers in the past, it remains a weakness in some lessons.
- Teachers in Years 5 and 6 make strong efforts to cover the legacy of some gaps in learning and understanding due to previous weaker teaching. These gaps are gradually being filled.
- In the main, teaching assistants give good support to pupils in their learning. Many lesson plans highlight the roles of teaching assistants and they make a good contribution. However, some more-able pupils are slow to progress to the higher levels of attainment, as assistants do not spend enough time supporting them.
- Good opportunities are provided in Key Stage 2 for pupils to use their reading, writing and mathematical skills, for example in a learning journey on the Amazon. This contained evidence of a wide range of writing for different purposes, the use of a science database for animal recognition, and the use of information and communication technology to produce a slide show, together with maps and graphs related to weather. At Key Stage 1, there are too many worksheets used, which limits the amount and range of writing which could be used.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good.

- Comments from parents and carers, records of exclusions and discussions with pupils confirm that the good behaviour seen in lessons and around the school is the norm.
- Pupils enjoy school, are keen to learn and are motivated by most teaching. This is now more the case than previously. It is reflected in the above-average attendance and low rates of persistent absence.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, for example by running the library, being members of the school council and helping at playtimes.
- Pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying. They are fully aware of its different forms, such as cyber-bullying. They say bullying is very rare and are equally sure that if and when it occurs, it is quickly sorted out by adults in the school.
- Pupils feel very safe, and their parents and carers agree. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils took part in a half-day safety competition in which they were placed in a wide range of imaginary scenarios and had to illustrate how they would stay safe.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management of the school require improvement, because despite improvements that have been made, there remain variations in the quality of teaching that prevent all pupils from making good progress and achieving well.
- The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, has a clear understanding of what now needs to be done to secure further improvement. Assessment data show clearly that, in this current year, pupils' progress has improved as the quality of teaching improves. The senior leadership team has an accurate view of the school's performance through tracking pupils' progress against their targets. This now shows stronger capacity to improve further.
- Pupils' progress meetings, at which teachers discuss with senior leaders how well their pupils are progressing, are now being extended with more meetings in which the progress of more-able pupils only is examined in an effort to ensure more reach the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. This has yet to have a positive effect on progress for these pupils. The school is working to achieve greater equality of opportunity for all pupils.
- Priorities for development arise from the school's careful and accurate examination of its provision. The current development plan is well designed to move the school further towards its goals. These are clearly stated and useful milestones are included in order to check the success

of its priorities.

- The quality of teaching of each member of staff is regularly reviewed. The results are used to secure appropriate further training. Not all senior leaders have previously undertaken lesson observations and so key subject leaders have not been able to see for themselves where improvements were needed. The school is now addressing this issue.
- The curriculum adequately meets pupils' needs, although pupils have too little chance to apply their basic skills in subjects other than English and mathematics at Key Stage 1. This is better at Key Stage 2.
- Links with parents and carers are effective. The school's newsletters and website provide good and varied information on a wide range of school issues.
- Partnerships within the local alliance of schools are effective and offer opportunities for training while giving members of Harlands' staff opportunities to lead training.
- Pupils have a good understanding of other cultures through links with Ghana, France and a proposed link to a London school. Their understanding of their own culture is enriched by a range of visits and visitors.

Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

- Where the local authority has been requested to give advice or support, this has been effective in supporting improvements.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body has made significant changes to its structure in order to better judge the quality of the school's provision for its pupils. It knows about the school's performance, understands a range of national data and the data presented to it by the school, and accesses training. Governors receive information about the quality of teaching. However, governors still mostly receive evidence from school leaders rather than find it for themselves. Nevertheless, the governing body does challenge the school based on the evidence it receives. More recently, it has discussed how it might be more involved in monitoring the school's work. Governors oversee the systems set for making targets for teachers' performance and have a good understanding of how teachers' salaries are linked to their performance. The governing body knows how the pupil premium is spent and is given reports on the impact of spending on eligible pupils.

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	130954
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	406398

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	193
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liza Reeves
Headteacher	Louisa Michie
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 June 2011
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