

Great Harwood Primary School

Rushton Street, Great Harwood, Blackburn, BB6 7JQ

Inspection dates 10–11 June 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher gives outstanding leadership, driving the school's improvement with energy and determination.
- Teaching has improved as staff have grown rapidly in understanding and applying actions that lead to effective learning. They wholeheartedly support the headteacher.
- Standards have risen in all year groups, so that from low starting points, pupils reach national levels of attainment by the end of Year 6.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and the most able pupils now make good and sometimes better progress.
- Subject coordinators have a strong impact on teaching and learning, because they provide the right amount of support and challenge for all staff.
- Pupils are proud of their school, and love to learn. There is a real buzz for learning around the school.
- Governors share this vision for excellence, and make a valuable contribution to improvements in teaching and pupils' progress. They make sure that all the statutory requirements for keeping children safe are met.
- Pupils behave well, and feel safe because they are very well cared for. Their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good; as one pupil said, 'Everyone is trustworthy.'
- Parents are delighted with the improvement which the school has made recently. One wrote, 'I am very happy to say I have seen big changes, thanks to everyone at Great Harwood.'

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Writing is improving and is now broadly average but pupils' skills in writing are not as secure as in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium do not make as much progress as other pupils, especially in writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 16 lessons and parts of lessons, one of which was observed jointly with the headteacher. The team inspector observed the headteacher giving feedback on pupils' achievement and behaviour.
- Meetings were conducted with governors, the staff team and three groups of pupils. A meeting was also held with a representative from the local authority. Inspectors took account of 16 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), which was not fully functioning during the inspection. They also considered written correspondence and the school's own records of parents' views.
- Evaluations of a range of school documentation contributed to the inspection judgments. These included details relating to safeguarding, the school's improvement plan, procedures for gaining an accurate view of the school's performance, records of pupils' attainment and progress. Samples of pupils' work were scrutinized.
- Inspectors listened to three groups of pupils reading.

Inspection team

Jean O'Neill, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Shutt

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is similar in size to most other primary schools. The headteacher also manages the nearby children's centre. The majority of pupils is of a minority ethnic background with a smaller proportion from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well-above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further raise achievement in writing by:
 - helping pupils develop a wider vocabulary, so as to write imaginatively and at length
 - providing additional support for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium grant to help them catch up with other pupils especially in writing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From low levels of development when children start in Nursery, pupils make good progress across the school to reach average standards by the end of Year 6.
- They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes. By the end of the Reception Year, children have closed the gaps in their skills in reading, writing and numeracy and are ready for Year 1. They use equipment carefully, to measure, pour and shape real and imaginary cake ingredients and talk confidently about what they think will happen when cakes are cooked.
- Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. Attainment is rising rapidly, and by the end of Year 2 is now above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils enjoy experimenting with numbers, find different ways to make 10, 30, and 100, with skill and accuracy. They are confident and articulate communicators, for example in describing the feeling of a girl in a story as, 'She's a little bit upset because she's lost her parents.'
- Phonics (letters and their sounds) are taught well. The proportion of pupils who met the required standard in the Year 1 check on their phonic skills was above average in 2013. Assessment information indicates that pupils are set to do at least as well this year. Year 2 pupils are becoming fluent readers and enjoy a good choice of reading books. They read information books confidently and also have good knowledge of classic stories such as *Alice in Wonderland*.
- Progress in Key Stage 2 is good and has accelerated over the last two years. Many pupils make strong progress from their low starting points, so that over half make more than expected progress in all subjects. Attainment by the end of Year 6 has been broadly average for the last three years in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence and school data indicates current attainment is at national levels with an increasing proportion of pupils now achieving the highest levels. Attainment in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test was very low in 2013, but standards have improved significantly and are expected to exceed national levels this year.
- Most pupils read confidently and use their skills well to support their learning in other subjects. Year 5 readers describe how their work with a published author inspired them to read 'different styles of books to those I would read normally' including 'proper novels without pictures'.
- Mathematics is taught well and pupils apply their skills confidently in a range of activities.
- The school's analysis and inspection information show that attainment in writing is broadly average, but many pupils lack the breadth of vocabulary needed to write with sufficient richness and depth, and that, as a result, their work is not always at a high enough standard to reach the next level. Improvements can be seen and pupils say their increased reading skills have also given them confidence in their other work, for example 'using more cliff-hangers in my writing'.
- The most able pupils now make good progress, reflecting the school's successful focus on providing more challenging work, for example, Year 6 work on algebraic equations. However, their writing is not sufficiently detailed and imaginative, so that fewer pupils attain the higher levels.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress, because of the strong support they receive.
- Pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals, do less well than other pupils in the school, especially in writing. Although gaps are closing, their attainment in all subjects is still about a term behind that of others in the school by the end of Year 6. School leaders and all staff are taking action to provide the right additional support, which is improving progress in reading and mathematics for these pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make strong progress because of the highly effective teaching and good support they receive from skilled teaching assistants. This is a strength of the school, and shows good promotion of equality of opportunity.
- Additional sports funding is having a good impact on standards, and pupils say they enjoy physical education much more than previously.

The quality of teaching is good

- The school has developed a strong and successful focus on improving teaching and learning. Lesson observations, assessments of pupils' progress and samples of their work indicate that teaching is now typically good, with rapid progress in many areas. Classrooms are vibrant and exciting places, where pupils are enticed into learning and clearly enjoy lessons.
- Pupils of all abilities are given challenging tasks that extend their learning. For example, when older pupils are asked to comment on how an author has used figurative language to gain an effect. Similarly, the less able pupils are given work which is very well-matched to their individual needs, so that they are making rapid gains in skills and understanding.
- Teachers regularly check the progress of all pupils and use this information to make changes to tasks to help pupils make good progress. Pupils are exceptionally knowledgeable about their own levels, proudly showing their star badges, which are awarded for making good progress each term. They say this 'makes you proud about your learning'.
- Regular meetings to discuss progress are much appreciated by the pupils and teachers. They have enabled both staff and pupils to be much clearer about precisely what each needs to do to make the next steps in learning, leading to accelerated progress for many pupils.
- The teaching of reading has improved, especially the approach to teaching phonics. Activities are more interesting and help younger pupils gain a more secure understanding of how to work out new words, resulting in better progress.
- Teaching of writing has successfully improved pupils' basic punctuation and grammar skills. The move to make work more imaginative with a range of stimulating challenges and experiences for pupils is at an early stage of development.
- Staff use questioning and discussion very effectively, for example, when pupils use 'talking partners' to discuss questions. This ensures that pupils stay focussed and enjoy learning. Pupils say that teachers make the work 'just right', and that 'Teachers make the lessons fun even though you're still learning.'
- Pupils are very clear about how to improve their work; they are given time in class to respond to teacher's marking, and all use the 'purple pen' system with confidence, frequently engaging in dialogue with the teacher about their learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well at all times. A few people 'spoil things by being chatty or fussy', according to the pupils, but this is not common. Pupils play happily together and listen carefully to each in class discussions.
- Attitudes to learning are exceptionally strong. From the very youngest ages, pupils concentrate really well, and are keen and enthusiastic learners. Although confident, they sometimes struggle to find the right words when speaking, but friends will readily step in and help out! They rightly take great pride in their beautifully presented work.
- Due to the really hard work of all the staff, and the support of parents, attendance is now broadly average.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe; they really care about one another, and respect all the adults in school. They say, 'Everyone is safe around here; nobody is unkind.' Pupils understand very well how to keep themselves safe on the internet, for example, and of the dangers of social networking sites.
- Pupils are fully aware of all types of bullying. They say that it is rare and quickly sorted out by staff and pupils themselves. Racism has now 'stopped altogether', according to the pupils, and the school's record confirm this improvement.
- Parents are confident their children are kept safe and have few concerns about their behaviour. The grounds have been adapted well to provide a more varied and safe environment which parents and pupils appreciate.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong leadership of the headteacher has been the decisive factor in moving the school forward so rapidly. Since the previous inspection, almost every aspect of the school, from the school building to curriculum and staffing, has been radically overhauled, always with a clear and unrelenting focus on achieving the best outcomes for all the pupils.
- Staff work very well together as a team; their confidence in the headteacher is summed up by one who said, 'Children and staff are encouraged to grow and develop and to gain confidence.' The school is well placed to improve.
- Tracking of pupils' progress is more precise and when pupils do not make the expected progress action is taken. For example, plans are in place to accelerate the progress of pupils in receipt of pupil premium to enable them to catch up more quickly with other pupils, especially in writing.
- Teaching is monitored more rigorously and support offered where it is most needed. Weaker aspects have been eradicated although a few aspects remain to be resolved especially in writing. Teachers are now held more to account for the progress pupils in their class make.
- Teachers have targets to improve their performance and these are based upon the school's key priorities and on leaders' findings from their checks on teaching. Expectations for teachers are high and linked clearly to the government's nationally expected standards for teachers and to salary progression.
- Middle leaders are now skilled at using information from checking on pupils' progress, to challenge and support all teachers to ensure pupils achieve well.
- The curriculum has improved a great deal, particularly in reading, with a rich variety of books, technology and opportunities to meet writers and performers, all of which inspire and stimulate pupils. This has led to improved progress in reading for all ages and abilities. Families are now much more involved in their children's reading, helped by family workshops, which have been much enjoyed by parents and children. However, opportunities to write imaginatively are not always promoted consistently.
- Pupils enjoy an increasing range of after-school and lunchtime clubs, which includes sport, music, art and drama activities for all abilities and interests.
- The school ensures that finances are used efficiently to ensure all pupils, including those supported by pupil premium funding, regularly go on educational trips and visits that provide experiences to meet their needs and interests.
- The primary school sport funding is being used effectively, through a local school sports partnership, to deliver physical education lessons and to provide extra sports to increase rates of participation.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils learn about life in other countries, for example, when Year 1 pupils wrote imaginary postcards home from Kenya. They are taught to respect all cultures, for example, why Muslims may wear special clothes, and they have created beautiful stained glass windows and careful models of famous world buildings.
- Leaders ensure that arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements.
- The school makes good use of the advice of the local authority, which provides light touch support, plus additional specific services at the request of this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have faced many challenges in recent years and readily acknowledge that they have been on a steep learning curve. They are now far more effective at holding senior leaders to account for their actions, and are increasingly asking searching questions from a well-informed standpoint.
 - Regular reviews and comparisons of data on pupils' progress give governors a clear overview of pupils' performance and the quality and effect of teaching. They are well aware that standards in writing are not yet as high as in other subjects, and are determined to ensure that this is thoroughly addressed.
 - Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and make informed decisions about

pay awards. Less effective teaching has been dealt with swiftly.

- The governors have reviewed the spending of pupil premium funding to make sure it is spent wisely. Changes have been made to improve pupils' progress, for example, on providing specialist staff, or additional individual and small group support to help them to close the gap at a faster rate. The impact of this has been greater in mathematics and reading, than in writing.

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	442423

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	231
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Abdul Waheed
Headteacher	Julie Ault
Date of previous school inspection	10 October 2012
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