

Harwich Community Primary School and Nursery

Barrack Lane, Harwich, CO12 3NP

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Pupils make good progress and attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is good with some that is outstanding. Much of the teaching is characterised by very stimulating classroom environments, attractive resources and careful use of support.
- The achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children are supported in their learning by strong planning, engaging activities and good links with parents.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special education needs make good progress in line with their peers. Careful identification of their needs and well-focused support enrich their learning.
- The school is well led and managed. Senior leaders are fully focused on pupils' achievement and well-being. Subject leaders understand their roles well and carry them out with enthusiasm. Governors know the school well and monitor its work carefully.
- The school environment is very attractive, engaging and inspires learning. Pupils enjoy being at school, behave well, feel safe and are looked after effectively.
- Social, moral, spiritual and cultural education is a major strength of the school. Links with schools in Africa, religious festivals and use of the local community enrich pupils' experiences.
- Attendance has significantly improved and is now at the national average level.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not high enough. Work in lessons is not always well matched to pupils' abilities to allow them to fully progress.
- The quality of marking in books is not always clear enough to enable pupils to understand how to improve.
- Standards in mathematics, while improving are not yet as strong as reading and writing.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors also observed the start and end of school, registration, two assemblies, lunch and break times, the breakfast club, a pupil rewards session ('Golden Time') and a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs.
- Formal meetings were held with pupils, staff, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors analysed the 28 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and scrutinised the 22 responses to the staff questionnaire. Informal discussions also took place with parents.
- Inspectors heard pupils read.
- A range of school documentation was examined including an analysis of pupil achievement, self-assessment and development planning and the evaluation of teaching overtime.
- Inspectors also looked at documentation related to safeguarding, risk assessments, minutes of governing body meetings, staff performance against targets, exclusions and attendance.

Inspection team

Michael Merva, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Susan Cox	Additional Inspector
Janet Tomkins	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is above average. Pupil premium is the funding provided for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the care of the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special education needs supported by the school at school action is above average.
- The proportion supported by the school at school action plus or with statements of special education needs is above average.
- An above-average proportion of pupils joins or leaves the school after the start of Year 1.
- The school provides a daily breakfast club, a range of lunchtime and after-school clubs including sports, cookery and mathematics.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and the rate of pupils' progress, especially in mathematics by:

- strengthening the quality of marking in books so that all pupils understand what they need to do to improve their learning
- ensuring that work is always well-matched to pupils' abilities to enable them to make maximum progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From their below-average starting points, pupils make consistently good progress in reading and writing. Progress in mathematics is currently good, but has been more variable overtime. Pupils are currently making above-expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is broadly average over time. Standards declined in 2013 in mathematics but, based on the school's pupil progress information, are now broadly average.
- Achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children enter the Nursery well below expectation, especially in communication and language. Improved teaching and learning, strong links with parents and careful monitoring of children's needs have enabled them to make good progress into Reception. They enter Key Stage 1 at a good level of development.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good. Clear evaluation of their needs, careful monitoring of their learning and very effective use of support has resulted in pupils making progress in line with their peers. The very small proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities and who speak English as an additional language make good progress.
- Achievement in reading is good. The proportion making good progress at the end of Year 6 has steadily improved over time and is above the national average. The number of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics (letters and the sounds they make) was well above average in 2012, but dropped in 2013. The school implemented strategies to rectify this and now anticipate that results will be at least in line with the national average in 2014. Older pupils read with confidence and are able to describe different types of books such as fiction and nonfiction. They enjoy reading at home.
- Achievement in mathematics is improving. The school has rightly identified it as a development area. The way mathematics is taught is being evaluated and greater effort has been made to clearly link it with other subjects and activities; in a lunchtime bingo club pupils are provided with a fun way to reinforce mental mathematics. As a result current attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average and the proportion of pupils making good progress is above the national average.
- The achievement of the more-able pupils is improving over time with an increasing proportion attaining Level 3 and above at the end of Year 2 and Level 5 and above at the end of Year 6. The school recorded its first ever Level 6 in writing in 2014. However, school leaders are aware that appropriate learning tasks for the more able remain an issue in some lessons.
- The high proportion of pupils entitled to additional support from the pupil premium make good progress. In 2013 these pupils were one term ahead of their classmates in mathematics, one term behind them in reading and one month ahead of them in writing. Effective support strategies such as the reduction in class size, enhanced resources and well-targeted support has resulted in the gap in reading being closed.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching over time is good and more is becoming outstanding. It is very carefully monitored by the school to ensure it has a positive impact on pupil progress.

- Teachers make good use of stimulating learning environments. These are common across the school and support good teaching and learning. For example, in a Reception lesson on Africa, the inside and outside environments were carefully prepared to create a sense of Africa which helped to make the topic real. As a result, pupils were fully engaged and made outstanding progress.
- Appropriate resources to meet the range of needs are also well-used to inspire learning. In a combined Year 5 and 6 English lesson, tracing the journey of the story's hero, maps were well-designed to match the abilities of all pupils. This allowed them to make good progress. However, evidence indicates this is not the case in all lessons.
- Additional adults are well deployed to support learning. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson on breaking down numbers into groups, additional adults worked very effectively with specific pupils to make sure they made good progress based on their learning needs. Staff worked well as a team to enhance learning for all groups.
- Pupils who join the school part-way through their primary education are given good support by teachers and other adults to ensure that they quickly make the same progress as others.
- The teaching of reading and literacy is well supported by the use of themes or topics across subjects. Studies of the seaside, the rain forest and the port of Harwich encourage reading, writing and research skills. In a mixed Year 5 and 6 guided reading lesson on coral reefs pupils were able to access the specialist language in the text to understand this unique environment better. Vocabulary is built by the use of new weekly 'wow' words in every classroom. Links with parents have been strengthened to support the use of reading as homework.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special education needs are well-supported in lessons. Pupils' needs are well known and they are supported very effectively in order to improve.
- The quality of marking is variable across the school. All books are marked and comments are made which celebrate pupils' work. However, the use of clear and precise comments to help pupils improve their work is inconsistent, hindering understanding and progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are friendly, happy and enjoy school. One said 'this is a lovely school'. They are well behaved at all times and one said 'it is rude to be naughty'. Pupils always come to lessons ready to learn but are occasionally distracted if work is too easy. Parents and staff overwhelmingly believe that behaviour is good.
- Pupils are aware of what bullying is and its different forms such as verbal, physical and cyber bullying. One pupil commented that bullying 'never happens' but they know where to get help in the very unlikely event that it does.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel very safe at school and are well looked after. The school provides them with a variety of means to learn about staying safe. Activities and assemblies involve outside agencies such as the police and the local vicar to help them be aware of road and train safety, 'stranger danger' and safety at school. Parents overwhelmingly feel that their children are safe and well looked after at school.
- Behaviour management is good. A clear list of rewards and sanctions are understood by pupils.

However, pupils say that no one ever behaves badly enough for the extreme end of sanctions, such as detentions, to ever happen. They relish the rewards that good behaviour brings such as the activities in 'golden time' and not many miss it.

- Attendance is currently in line with the national average, a clear improvement over previous years. This demonstrated a clear capacity to improve. This is because a variety of improvement strategies have been rigorously and successfully applied. There have been no permanent exclusions in recent years and no exclusions of any sort in 2013/2014.
- Behaviour is not yet outstanding because in lessons where work does not fully meet the needs of all pupils some become disengaged with their learning.

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has created a very attractive environment which makes learning both stimulating and challenging. 'Achieve our best' is the motto for both pupils and staff. The school's values and beliefs also enhance pupils' skills, experiences and equality of opportunity. Subject leaders understand their responsibilities well and implement them with vigour.
- The school's processes for monitoring teaching overtime are both accurate and robust. A combination of formal and informal systems determines strengths and areas for improvement. It also provides support for improvement. The school understands why the quality of teaching is not yet outstanding and is applying appropriate strategies to achieve it. This demonstrates a clear capacity to improve.
- Self-evaluation is accurate. Pupil progress is tracked by senior leaders and areas of improvement, such as in mathematics, are defined. Senior leaders have also recognised the need to include subject leaders more fully in the use of whole school progress data.
- The management of teachers' performance is clear and closely related to pupils' learning. Targets are well set to improve performance and are well linked to formal lesson observations. The process is valued by staff.
- The range of subjects is imaginatively devised to stimulate learning. Centred on themes such as toys, Ancient Egypt and famous people, pupils are able to apply a range of skills to their work. The local community is well-used to support learning. A conscious effort has been made to make the school environment a strong stimulus for learning. This is seen in the very attractively designed classrooms and the enhancement of school's outdoor environment such as the wildlife area.
- The subjects are supplemented by a range of additional activities designed to broaden pupils' experiences and support their learning. Participation in themes events such as 'Evacuation Day' helped them to understand what some children in the local area experienced during World War 2. A participation event at Kent Well House allowed them to live in Tudor England for a day. School clubs such as cookery and football extend their skills and knowledge. The breakfast club provides a very welcoming and purposeful start to the school day.
- External funding provided by the pupil premium and the Primary sports funding initiative are well-used. A range of actions, such as more individual pupil support and smaller classes, help those entitled to the pupil premium funding to make good progress. The sports provision has been strengthened by the employment of a specialist coach, a new and more attractive

football kit and more sports-related resources for use at break and lunchtimes. One impact of the use of sports funding is that now the school is doing much better in external sports competitions.

- Opportunities for social, moral, spiritual and cultural education are rich and varied. Links with schools in Ghana and Namibia and trips to Holland support the understanding of different cultures and help to cultivate anti-racism. Participation in a Hindu religious festival enhances the understanding of other faiths. The use of classroom and playground monitors engender a sense of responsibility and an understanding of right and wrong.
- The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. This demonstrates a clear improvement from the previous inspection. Robust understanding and monitoring children's needs, an interesting and varied curriculum, strong links with parents and a very attractive and exciting learning environment have enabled children to make good progress.
- The school works successfully to engage parents. A particularly unique initiative is the use of a dedicated group of staff who work closely with specific families. Attendance at parents' evenings is high and engagement is supplemented by a range of social activities. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and greatly value the information they receive
- The local authority provides support to this good school only when needed. It provides help with self-evaluation and collaboration with other primary schools.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors monitor the work of the school carefully. They are well aware of its strengths and areas for improvement. Governors fully analyse achievement and teaching data. As a result they understand why the school is not yet outstanding. They also use pupil achievement data to monitor groups of pupils to measure equality. Finances are well monitored and governors are very mindful of the funding requirements of salary progression through the use of setting targets for teachers. They make sure that any pay increase is fully linked to pupils' achievement and classroom performance. Governors scrutinise the impact of funding provided by the pupil premium and the primary sports funding and monitor its impact well. An organised evaluation and review system ensures all policies are in place and the governors' programme of school visits makes sure these are effectively implemented. Governors confirm that safeguarding meets statutory requirements and that all risk assessments are in place. They readily engage in a range of training to support them in improving their effectiveness such as the use of school data, safeguarding, child protection and Ofsted requirements. Governors are very proud of the school and very supportive of the caring environment it provides.

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	114843
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	443928

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	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lawrie Payne
Headteacher	Val Metcalf
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2009
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