

Harpur Hill Primary School

Trent Avenue, Harpur Hill, Buxton, SK17 9LP

Inspection dates 30 September–1 October 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress in mathematics and English is not consistently good enough throughout the school to ensure they reach the standards they are capable of by the end of Year 6.
- Teachers do not always plan work that is challenging for pupils of different abilities, so some find their work too easy while others find it too hard.
- The teaching of reading is not systematic from the time children enter Reception through to Year 6.
- Pupils are not always encouraged enough to extend their skills during lessons.
- Activities for children in Reception do not always capture their imagination or help them to practise key skills such as writing and numeracy.
- Leaders, managers and governors do not check thoroughly that policies and procedures are being implemented consistently. This has resulted in inconsistent teaching of key aspects of English and the marking of pupils' work.
- The school improvement plan is not focused sufficiently sharply on improving teaching and pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers, supported by governors, have improved some aspects of Reception children's education, pupils' progress in Years 3 and 4, and writing across the school.
- There is a strong team feel in the school and a commitment to ongoing improvement.
- Pupils' personal development is nurtured well in a safe and caring environment. Parents are pleased with the quality of care provided for their children.
- Pupils behave well and their understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe is good.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to engage in and enjoy a wide range of sport.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed parts of 17 lessons. Three of these observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' work, considered assessment data on pupils' progress and listened to some pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- A range of documents were looked at, including the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school improvement plan, pupils' achievement and attendance data, information about the work of the Family Support Liaison Officer and documents relating to safeguarding and child protection.
- Discussions were held with pupils with responsibilities in the school and with other pupils during break-times and lessons.
- Account was taken of the 64 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). The 31 responses to the staff questionnaire were also considered.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, including senior and subject leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority.

Inspection team

Alison Cogher, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Daley

Additional Inspector

Malcolm Johnstone

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Harpur Hill is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils who are looked after by the local authority or known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national average.
- The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, or the new health education, health and care plan, is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- A before and after-school club operates in the school during term time. It is managed independently and is inspected and reported on separately.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so it is good across the school, by making sure that:
 - the marking of pupils' work helps them to understand how well they have achieved and what would make their work better
 - activities in lessons provide a good level of challenge for pupils of different abilities
 - in Reception, activities that allow children to practise their skills in counting and ordering numbers, and writing, are sufficiently stimulating so that children choose to engage in them.
- Raise pupils' achievement by:
 - teaching reading, phonics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling effectively, so pupils build up their skills systematically from entry to Reception to Year 6
 - providing open-ended tasks that encourage pupils to use and extend their knowledge and skills.
- Make leadership and management more effective by making sure that:
 - the school improvement plan supports improvement across all age groups in teaching, particularly in reading and in phonics, English grammar, punctuation and spelling
 - leaders and governors check more often that whole school policies and procedures are being implemented consistently, and improving the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management have not been good enough to secure consistently effective teaching through the school. Pupils' progress over time has been too variable.
- The school's evaluation of its performance is too generous, because it is not focused enough on what national or school data indicate about pupils' progress. Leaders do not compare the school's performance sufficiently closely against the most up-to-date expectations for the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning.
- The school improvement plan has had an impact in some areas such as securing improved teaching in Years 3 and 4, and the development of a calculations policy to support improvement in mathematics. It is not focused enough on securing whole-school improvement to teaching to increase pupils' progress year-on-year so their achievement rises in, for example, reading.
- Leaders, including those responsible for subjects, are not checking often enough that whole-school policies and procedures are being implemented consistently, or if they are having the expected impact on pupils' learning.
- There have been recent changes to the roles and responsibilities of senior and subject leaders. The Reception leader is new to her role and is supported well by the previous post holder. Improving children's achievements has been given a high priority, so that improvements secured in 2014 are developed further.
- Suitable management of teachers' performance ensures that targets for staff are linked to school improvement priorities. These targets have not always been challenging enough to make sure that pupils, including the more able, achieve all that they can.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced and helps to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. The school is currently considering the implications of the new curriculum expectations, and those of assessment, on its whole-school planning and practice.
- As a result of actions taken in the last year, more children now reach a good level of development by the time they leave Reception, and more pupils pass the national phonic screening check in Year 1. Improvements in the teaching of writing across the school, with the resulting rise in pupils' progress and attainment, demonstrate that leaders are able to bring about whole-school improvement.
- The local authority is providing support for leaders and is helping them to identify and prioritise what needs to be improved.
- The use made of the pupil premium funding this year has ensured that pupils have had equal access to activities, including school trips, and that they have received targeted help with their learning. Provisional data indicate that the wide gaps evident in 2013 between pupil groups, including disadvantaged pupils, have narrowed in 2014.
- Leadership has strengths in the way it promotes high expectations of pupils' social interaction, their behaviour and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The Parent Support and Liaison Officer provides very valuable and effective support for families and pupils in times of need.
- The primary school physical education and sports funding is used very well to promote excellence and enjoyment in physical activity, including in a wide variety of sports. An increasing number of pupils, including younger pupils, are regularly involved in physical activity during and after school. The school is rightly proud of its achievements in inter-school and county sports competitions.
- Parents who responded to the questionnaire are pleased with the school's leadership and the way it

ensures their children are safe and well cared for.

■ The governance of the school:

- A number of governors are new to their role. They are being well supported by more experienced governors and are actively pursuing opportunities for training so that they are able to carry out their roles effectively. They are clear about what the school does well, and are developing their understanding of pupils' progress and attainment and how this can indicate what needs to be improved.
- Governors are developing procedures to improve the regularity and rigour with which they check on the school's performance. Policies are updated regularly and the school's finances are monitored closely. Governors understand the expected impact of the spending of additional funding, including the pupil premium.
- Governors ensure that health and safety checks are carried out, and that the school meets safeguarding requirements.
- Governors are informed about the way staff performance is managed. They are clear about how salary increases are linked to expectations of teachers' performance.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The attendance of the vast majority of pupils is good and this reflects their enjoyment of school and the extent to which they value their friendships. They are polite, well-mannered and welcoming. Pupils are proud of their school and the opportunities they have to learn.
- Pupils appreciate the school environment, inside and outside, and take good care of the resources they use such as the wide range of equipment provided so they can enjoy being active during break-times.
- Pupils are confident and keen to offer their ideas and opinions in group and class discussions. They listen carefully to each other and adults, and respond positively to any advice or support they are given. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and carry out their duties conscientiously.
- Pupils show good levels of tolerance and help the very few pupils who struggle to behave well to improve their behaviour quickly. Pupils say they enjoy the range of sporting activities the school offers and are proud of their school's achievements in this area. They are developing a good understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle.
- In lessons, pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning that help them to succeed in the tasks they are set. There is very little inappropriate behaviour and pupils rarely interrupt the learning of others. Pupils' work indicates that they try hard and they are generally productive. When given the opportunity to set their own goals and push themselves on, some older pupils show that they can respond maturely and responsibly.
- The school's effective promotion of good behaviour and respect for all supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The staff make sure that there is no discrimination and that all pupils have the opportunity to achieve equally and be happy at school. Pupils say they feel safe and well cared for, and their parents, the staff and governors agree.
- Pupils say that bullying of any kind, including name calling, is very rare and they are confident that if it does occur it is dealt with effectively. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe in a range of situations, including when playing together, during lessons where safety equipment is used, and when using a range of social media. Pupils know they can talk to an adult if they have a worry or concern and are confident that they will be supported.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching is variable across the school and between subjects. This has led to pupils making inconsistent progress, as evident in reading and pupils' competence in phonics, English grammar, punctuation and spelling. As a result pupils' overall achievement is not good enough.
- Teachers do not always make good enough use of the information gathered through assessing pupils' attainment and progress when planning lesson activities. Consequently, some pupils find their work too hard, whilst others find it too easy. This holds back progress over time, including that of the more-able pupils.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work typically praises their effort, and gives an indication of how well they have done. However, it does not always give pupils a clear message about what they have achieved and what they need to make their work better.
- There is no whole-school approach to the teaching of reading, and there is less emphasis on teaching reading skills to pupils in Years 3 to 6 than in lower year groups. As a result pupils, including the more able, are not being supported fully to make the progress they are capable of by Year 6.
- Actions taken in the past year have led to more effective phonics teaching in Reception and in Years 1 and 2, which is helping pupils to improve their spelling. In addition, action taken higher up the school to improve pupils' skills in English grammar, punctuation and spelling has shown some success. However, there is no whole-school approach to teaching pupils English grammar, punctuation and spelling so they are able to build up their knowledge and skills year on year.
- Teachers ask questions skilfully during lessons to check pupils' understanding and to correct any misunderstandings. Some teachers also challenge pupils to widen their explanations or give reasons for their responses which moves their learning on well, but this is not a routine feature of lessons across the school.
- A whole-school approach to the teaching of writing has been successful in improving the progress pupils make and raising attainment.
- Where learning is most effective, teachers provide a good range of resources to support the activities, and motivate and enthuse pupils to actively engage with them. Pupils are encouraged to make decisions, to use and apply previously learned knowledge and skills, and where appropriate to set their own goals. For example, pupils in a Year 5 mathematics lesson made significant gains in their knowledge and understanding of polygons, parallel and perpendicular lines after investigating a painting by Kandinsky as a class, and then rising to the challenge to create a picture of their own in a similar style.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to support individuals and groups of pupils. They make a good contribution to the learning of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and in some instances to the progress made by the more-able pupils.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- The progress made by pupils as they move through the school is not consistently good in all classes. As a result they do not reach the standards they are capable of by the time they leave at the end of Year 6.
- Children start in Reception with a range of experiences and skills that overall are typical for their age. The progress they make enables some children to reach the early learning goals expected when they join Year 1, but some do not. Records indicate that an increasing number of children are reaching these goals, with the 2014 results showing a marked improvement on 2013.
- In Year 1 the proportion of pupils who pass the phonic knowledge screening check is typically broadly average. There was an improvement in 2014, with many more pupils reaching or exceeding the expected level.

- Progress in Key Stage 1 is not consistently good, and by the end of Year 2 standards are again broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards in writing show some improvement.
- The standards reached by pupils in Year 6 are close to the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. An improving trend has been secured in writing as a result of the school's focus on this subject. Similarly, there has been some improvement this year in pupils' English grammar, punctuation and spelling as a result of specific teaching of these skills.
- Overall progress in Key Stage 2 is not yet consistently good. Some pupils are catching up on the limited progress they made in earlier years. Action taken to improve pupils' progress in Years 3 and 4 is ensuring that pupils are entering Year 5 and 6 with improved standards compared to previous years. The more-able pupils are beginning to demonstrate their ability to sustain standards that are above the levels expected nationally for their age.
- Most groups of pupils make similar progress and achieve equally. In previous years disadvantaged pupils supported by pupil premium funding have left Year 6 up to a year behind their classmates in reading, writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. In 2014 the gap narrowed significantly because the support disadvantaged pupils received enabled some of them to make better progress than their peers.
- Disabled pupils, and those who have special educational needs, make similar progress to that of other pupils.
- The impact of the primary school physical education and sports funding on developing healthy lifestyles has been good. Good resources enable pupils to engage enthusiastically in physical activity at break-times and an increased number are engaged regularly in sporting activities after school. Pupils have many opportunities to represent their school in sport and talk about being active as an important part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The early years provision requires improvement

- On entry, children's skills are broadly at the level expected for their age in key areas, including their early reading, writing, number and personal and social development. Their achievement in Reception, including that of children who have special educational needs and the more able, requires improvement. Children are suitably prepared for the next stage of education as most make the expected progress in their learning.
- The early years leader is new to her role and is being well supported by the school to develop her skills quickly so that she can secure improvements in teaching and the progress children make. Indoor and outdoor child-chosen activities, including some that are aimed at encouraging them to count and order numbers or to write, are not always presented in a way that captures children's imagination. As a result children often avoid these activities and fail to maximise their skills. Adult-led activities, such as those that focus on counting to 10, do capture children's interest and successfully move their learning on.
- Children settle quickly as they enter school. Good links with parents ensure that an ongoing dialogue between home and school contributes well to children's emotional well-being. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well through the trusting and supportive relationships they develop with adults, the activities they engage in and the opportunities they have to work and play together.

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	112523
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	449234

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	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Rushworth
Headteacher	Patrick O'Connor
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2010
Telephone number	01298 23261
Fax number	01298 22710
Email address	info@harpurhill.derbyshire.sch.uk

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