

Hartsbourne Primary School

Hartsbourne Road, Bushey, WD23 1SJ

Inspection dates 9–10 October 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- Although leaders, including governors, have taken robust and successful action to improve pupils' behaviour on the playground, pupils say that occasionally, incidents of bullying still happen.
- Systems for leaders at all levels to check the effectiveness of their actions to improve the school, particularly pupils' behaviour and safety are not always rigorous enough.
- Communication with parents is not good enough. Some parents have said that it is difficult to get to see the headteacher. A few have expressed concerns that leaders do not deal effectively enough with bullying or respond quickly to parental concerns.
- The school website lacks detailed information about what is taught to pupils each term and in each class, and about how well pupils achieve.
- Teachers in charge of subjects other than English and mathematics are not checking the quality of teaching in their subjects in order inform actions which will raise standards.
- School improvement plans are not clear as to how actions can be checked to see if they have been successful in raising standards.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well and work hard in lessons and enjoy their learning.
- After ups and downs in the past, achievement is now good for pupils in Key Stage 2.
- Attainment at the end of Year 2 has been consistently good over recent years, reflecting good progress in Key Stage 1.
- Children receive a good start to their education in the Reception class.
- Marking has improved and informs pupils of what they have done well and how they could improve their work.
- Leaders make regular checks on the quality of teaching and provide teachers with useful feedback about how they can improve.
- The teaching of phonics is good. Pupils make very good progress and a high proportion achieve the required standard at the end of Year 1.
- Spiritual and cultural education is good and pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils enjoy being taught a wide range of subjects which are being developed appropriately in line with national guidelines.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons. The headteacher accompanied the inspectors to six of these lesson visits.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body, two representatives from the local authority, teachers in charge of subjects and the headteacher.
- Meetings were also held with the leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage and the special educational needs co-ordinator.
- Inspectors met with parents before the start of school and also scrutinised the 137 responses to the on-line questionnaire, Parent View. The 31 comments left on Parent View were read and taken into account.
- Pupils' work in exercise books was scrutinised and inspectors observed behaviour at break and lunch times.
- Inspectors talked to pupils about their views of the school.
- A number of documents were scrutinised including the minutes of governors' meetings, the school improvement plan, self-evaluation documents and information about pupils' achievement.
- Staff provided their views of the school by completing questionnaires.
- On 11 November an inspector visited the school to collect additional evidence about pupils' behaviour and safety.

Inspection team

Robin Taverner, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Brenda Titley	Additional Inspector
Sarah Warboys	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Hartsbourne Primary is a smaller than the average primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after by the local authority, is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is below average. The proportion of such pupils supported at school action plus, or who have a statement of special educational needs, is also below average.
- The school meets the government floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school has seven classes. Children in the Reception class attend full-time.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that leaders at all levels, including governors:
 - build on successful strategies to improve pupils' behaviour by providing activities and opportunities available to them at break and lunchtimes
 - increase the rigour with which they check the effectiveness of their improvement actions, particularly on pupils' behaviour and safety.
- Improve relationships with parents by ensuring that leaders, including governors:
 - make efficient and effective home-school communication a key priority
 - routinely share with parents information about how effectively they are dealing with bullying and how they have responded to their concerns
 - improve the information available to parents on the school website about the subjects and topics taught throughout the year for every subject, and the impact of pupil premium funding on disadvantaged pupils' attainment.
- Improve the leadership of teaching and learning in order to make teaching even better by:
 - enabling the leaders of subjects, other than English and mathematics, to check the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement in their subjects so that they can plan appropriate improvements
 - producing improvement plans which show clearly the intended impact of actions on pupils' achievements.
- An external review of governance should be undertaken to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance can be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Although leaders and managers have taken appropriate action and been successful in securing improvements to pupils' behaviour and safety, this work has not been meticulous enough. Moreover, it has not been communication well enough to parents to give them confidence that their concerns have been addressed and that issues have been resolved.
- A small number of parents who responded to the online parent questionnaire, expressed unease about pupils' behaviour, how effectively the school deals with cases of bullying, leadership and management and the school's response to raised concerns. However, the vast majority of parents who spoke to inspectors were positive about the work of the school. Many say that they are delighted with their children's education; they say they are making good progress and enjoy going to school.
- As a consequence of concerns raised by parents, clear improvements have been made to the level of supervision for pupils at break and lunch times. Training has helped supervisors to interact increasingly well with pupils as they play. They encourage pupils to keep physically active and develop their social and physical skills by using the small games apparatus available. This has led to a marked decrease in the number of accidents and incidents of poor behaviour, particularly of bullying. Nevertheless, inspectors found that some pupils did express worries about bullying.
- The school website has a lack of detailed information about exactly what is to be taught to children in each class and each term. There is insufficient information about the difference that pupil premium funding has made to the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
- Teachers in charge of subjects other than English and mathematics are quite new to post and cannot yet show how they have monitored the teaching of their subjects or how they have taken steps to make improvements. They have, however, organised special weeks and projects, such as a science week, to promote learning and enjoyment of their subjects.
- School self-evaluation is largely accurate, particularly with regard to its judgements of teaching and achievement. School improvement planning identifies some relevant areas to improve but is not clear as to how the impact of any changes can be checked to see if they have been successful in raising standards. Similarly, systems to check how effective improvement actions have been on pupils' behaviour and safety are not rigorous enough.
- The school uses pupil premium to provide additional lessons for individual pupils. Much of its use has been effective and most pupils achieve as well as others in the school.
- The headteacher is clear about the standards of teaching she expects in the school. She took a full part in the inspection, including observing teaching and learning, and provided accurate feedback to teachers observed.
- The leadership of English and mathematics is good. The school has correctly identified areas which need to improve and has been successful in raising standards. For example, last year, progress in reading was not as good as in mathematics. The school has taken action to remedy this and now the teaching of reading has improved, as have rates of progress.
- Leaders have taken appropriate steps to introduce the new National Curriculum. There are plans in place to change how staff will assess pupils' work, in line with the requirements of the new National Curriculum. The school is adopting the approach promoted by the local authority.
- Children in the Reception class enjoy a wide range of activities which challenge their thinking and support their learning of the basic skills.
- The school works well with the local authority, which provides good support. The school has acted upon

advice and, for example, has improved the standard of work in children's exercise books and also the effectiveness of marking. It is also providing good support by responding to leaders' request to carry out a review of behaviour and safety and supporting them in implementing its recommendations.

- Primary sport funding is used well to employ sports coaches to teach physical education during lesson times and also to run sports clubs during some lunch times. Teachers are required to take part in coach led sessions to help develop their skills in the teaching of sports and physical education. Senior leaders have not yet checked to see if the quality of teaching has improved as a result. More pupils are now taking part in sports activities.
- The school promotes the social and moral elements of learning well in lessons. However, though improving rapidly, is not as well developed on the playground.
- Spiritual and cultural education is good and pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Pupils study different religions and are taught to respect each other's differences. Special multicultural weeks are held to learn about diversity. Charities are supported which have links to the school community. For example a 'Red White and Blue' day was held during the inspection to support an armed forces charity. The school is involved with the Take One Picture Programme in partnership with the National Gallery. This programme promotes art appreciation and inspires studies in a range of subjects.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very knowledgeable about the school, including achievement and the quality of teaching, and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The school's finances are in good shape and governors make sure that pupil premium and sports funding is used appropriately. However, governors have been remiss in ensuring that information is properly communicated on the school website. The website lacks detailed information about what is taught to pupils each school year and the impact of the pupil premium funding for disadvantaged pupils.
 - Governors are aware of the dissatisfaction with the school among some of the parents. Actions to improve the situation have been slow to get going but are now gaining momentum. Governors attended a Parent Forum meeting a year ago during which some parents made a number of complaints. Many actions were taken by the school, but governors have not communicated with parents effectively enough to allay their fears about the behaviour issues on the playground and supervision of pupils at key times of the day.
 - Governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.
 - There is insufficient evidence in the minutes of governors' meetings that any challenge is provided to senior leaders about the running of the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- In the past, pupils' behaviour has not been good enough, particularly due to boisterous games on the playground. This often led to incidents of poor behaviour. The school has taken effective steps to improve pupils' behaviour by improving the level of supervision on the playground. Staff are engaging increasingly well with pupils to, for example, involve them in supervised games and activities.
- Year 6 pupils act as 'play leaders' to the children in the Reception and to Year 1 and 2 pupils. They are proud of their yellow jackets and say that the responsibility helps them to 'mature as a human being'.
- Pupils are polite and courteous as they move in and around the school. They behave well, particularly in lessons. They listen attentively to teachers and other adults and work hard to complete tasks to the best of their ability. Pupils are well motivated and enjoy their learning.
- Pupils look smart in their uniforms. Classrooms, corridors and library areas are well-organised and orderly places. Pupils' achievements are proudly displayed and their rewards recorded.

- Children in the Reception class are well supervised and behave well inside and outside of their classroom.
- Attendance is above average and improving. There are effective strategies in place to improve attendance and follow up when pupils are absent without a known reason. The school works well with the education welfare service to improve cases of persistent absence.
- The vast majority of pupils arrive at school on time.
- Exclusions (periods of time when pupils are not allowed to attend school) are very rare.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- The school has now taken steps to improve the concerns of a few parents about the level of supervision at the beginning of the school day, and when they enter the school grounds. Leaders have recently arranged for a member of staff to be outside the school during this period.
- Until recently, the games played by pupils on the playground were rough and led to too many minor accidents. Arrangements for break and lunchtimes have changed significantly. Pupils say that these changes have led to a marked decrease in the number of bumps and bruises.
- The school keeps detailed records of incidents of poor behaviour including of bullying. The headteacher has carried out an analysis of incidents and can show that there have been fewer incidents recently. Most pupils say they feel safe and well looked after at school. They know how to seek help and have confidence in the staff to deal with any issues. Pupils say, however, there are still some incidents of bullying, such as name-calling or teasing.
- Pupils understand how to keep safe and have a good knowledge and understanding of the dangers of using computers and the internet.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers make good use of assessment information to plan lessons which build on what pupils already know, can do or understand. As a result, pupils' progress well in lessons and over time.
- The marking of pupils' work has improved and is now good. Through their marking, teachers show pupils what they have done well and what could do to improve their work. Pupils are given time to read the advice and act upon it to improve their work. This supports the good progress they make.
- Teachers make good use of questioning to assess pupils' understanding as the lesson progresses. They make clear to pupils what they must do to show that they have successfully understood the purpose of the lesson. For example, when they are asked to complete a piece of writing, the teacher will remind pupils of the need to include the correct punctuation and grammar and to try hard with their spellings.
- Teachers provide clear explanations at the start of lessons so that pupils know exactly what they are learning and how to complete a task.
- In the Reception class, Year 1 and Year 2, the teaching of phonics (sounds that letters represent in words) is particularly strong. Pupils are placed in groups according to their prior knowledge and make very good progress. Teaching is clearly structured and pupils of all abilities are challenged well.
- Teaching assistants usually provide good support to pupils in lessons. However, sometimes they do not ask enough of the pupils and do too much of the work for them.
- Teachers provide pupils with homework which helps them to apply or reinforce the learning which has taken place in lessons.

- Following a dip in progress in reading in 2013, the school has reviewed the way it teaches reading and has made improvements to guided reading sessions. In these lessons, the teacher works closely with a group of pupils who share a particular text. Other pupils work on improving their comprehension skills, read independently or write reviews of books they have read. The new system is helping pupils to make good progress in reading.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Achievement is good and has become more consistent at Key Stage 2, after being too variable for several years.
- Due to better teaching, the school has been particularly successful with improving the progress pupils make in reading.
- Year 6 pupils' attainment was high in reading, writing and mathematics this year. It was particularly high in mathematics where the proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels of attainment was well above the national average.
- The achievement of pupils at Key Stage 1 has been more consistent over time. For the last three years, good progress from average starting points has led to attainment that has been well above average for reading, writing and mathematics.
- Phonics is taught particularly well and this has led to a much higher proportion achieving the required standards by the end of Year 1 than is the case nationally.
- Children achieve well in the Reception class which gives them a good start to their education.
- There are very few disadvantaged pupils in the school. Due to the appropriate use of pupil premium funding, school performance information shows that most of these pupils achieve at least as well as their classmates and all other pupils nationally.
- Disabled pupils and those with special education needs make good progress due to the support they receive in class from the teachers and the teaching assistants.
- The school caters well for the most able pupils, and they achieve well. For example, a knowledgeable and skilful member of the support staff provides extra tuition to the most able Year 6 pupils. Subsequently, an above average proportion achieved the very high Level 6 in mathematics in 2013.
- Pupils in the current Year 5 and 6 did not make sufficient progress last year because the teaching delivered by temporary teachers covering for staff absence was not good enough. The school is working successfully to make sure these pupils are catching up this year and achieve as well as they are able.

The early years provision is good

- According to school assessments, about half the children enter the school with the skills and knowledge which are typical for their age. Children make good progress and by the end of the year the majority are ready for the next stage in their education.
- Teaching is good in the Reception class. Structured group teaching is balanced with opportunities for children to choose their activities. Despite not being in school for very long, most children are already beginning to read and write simple words.
- Children are successfully encouraged to develop their curiosity and knowledge of the world around them. For example, in one session, a group were using magnifying glasses to study insects. Another group were experimenting with water flow using a guttering system.

- Good leadership has led to improved teaching and facilities for the children.
- Behaviour is good. Children settle well to tasks and concentrate for sustained periods of time. Safety is good and children play happily in their separate outdoor area.
- An effective assessment system is in use. Adults record the achievement of the children against all the areas of learning. Effective 'learning journeys' are kept which record children's achievement, with comments and often photographic evidence. These help staff to plan the children's next steps in learning.

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	117300
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	449351

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	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Tina Candler
Headteacher	Valerie Hudson
Date of previous school inspection	27 May 2011
Telephone number	020 89506853
Fax number	N/A
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