

Harriers Banbury Academy

Harriers View, Bloxham Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 9JW

Inspection dates

4–5 November 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Leadership and management	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
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 good school.

- Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points. Their achievement in reading, writing and mathematics is good by the time they leave in Year 6.
- Children in the Reception classes quickly develop their skills, due to the good teaching they receive. They are well prepared to move into Year 1.
- Pupils' skills in reading are very good. Younger pupils learn the sounds letters make (phonics) quickly and can use this knowledge well. Older pupils enjoy reading and read with fluency and understanding.
- Pupils' behaviour in school is good. In lessons, they work hard and try their best. Pupils say that they are safe and well cared for in school and get along together.
- The new principal leads a determined effort to improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of the pupils. The vice principal is very effective in supporting his efforts to make the school better.
- The leadership team within the school has received good support from the academy trust.
- The governing body works closely with the school. It diligently holds the school to account for the progress all pupils make including those who are disadvantaged or at risk of not doing as well.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the pupils is good. Discrimination is not accepted and equality of opportunity is promoted. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for life in modern Britain.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- More able pupils do not achieve the highest possible levels because teachers do not challenge them sufficiently in all lessons.
- The middle leaders are still developing their skills. They are not yet fully effective in improving the quality of teaching and the outcomes of all of the pupils.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed one family assembly and learning in 19 lessons some of which were jointly observed with members of the senior and middle leadership teams.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and senior and middle leaders. The lead inspector also held a meeting with the Chair of the Governing Body and met with Chief Executive of the Academy Trust.
- The inspectors listened to pupils from Year 2 and Year 6 read. Samples of pupils' work were scrutinised by an inspector.
- They examined a wide range of documents, including the school's information on pupils' recent progress, planning and documentation about checks on teaching. They also looked at records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors took into account 47 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the views shared in a letter from a parent. They considered the views of staff through the 18 staff questionnaires returned to the inspection team.

Inspection team

David Hogg, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lucy Maughan	Additional Inspector
Gordon Jackson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Harriers Banbury Academy converted to become an academy school on 1 February 2013. When its predecessor school, Harriers Ground Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to require improvement overall.
- The school is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. All pupils attend full time.
- Most pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also higher than that seen nationally.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is lower than the national average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is a little above that found nationally.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is a little higher when compared with that found in most schools. This is funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after.
- The principal has been in post since September 2014, having held the post of vice principal from the previous Easter. The middle leaders were also appointed in September 2014 through internal promotions.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by making sure teachers plan learning activities that challenge the more able pupils to achieve at the highest levels.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring the skills of the new middle leadership team are further developed in checking the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The principal is determined to improve the school and raise the achievement of the pupils through better teaching. The vice principal works closely alongside him and together they form a very effective leadership team. Senior leaders are rigorous in their work.
- The school has appointed staff to take responsibility for improving literacy and mathematics across the school. The middle leaders are clear about their roles. The senior leaders are providing training and support as they develop their skills. They are beginning to check the work of teachers and the senior leaders retain a significant role in reviewing the quality of teaching. Consequently the work of the middle leaders is yet to have an impact on raising the achievement of pupils across the school.
- The academy trust provides good support to the school. It oversees the work of the school and provides support to the leadership team when necessary to help them move the school forwards.
- The senior leaders check pupils' progress closely. They check the quality of teaching by scrutinising pupils' workbooks and observing what is happening in lessons. This allows the senior leaders to judge the effectiveness of the additional support available to disadvantaged pupils. The school is determined that all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed. The information the school has shows progress made by disadvantaged pupils is improving.
- The school have taken the necessary steps to improve the quality of teaching by providing staff training and individual support to teachers when necessary. This is having an impact already. For example, the quality of marking now in some classes is much better than that previously seen. Staff now have clear targets that are aimed at raising the achievement of the pupils. These are linked to the opportunities staff have for promotion or salary improvement.
- The learning activities are good. They provide the pupils with opportunities to practise and develop their skills in literacy and numeracy in different subjects. The topic areas are broad and balanced. Pupils are encouraged to share what they already know about a subject. They then have the opportunity to decide what they would like to research further. For example, Year 2 pupils knew Queen Victoria had had 'a few' children and wanted to know how many. They were quite surprised when they found out how many.
- The school looks to widen the experiences of the pupils with additional activities and visits to places of interest. For example, last summer Year 6 pupils enjoyed a Space Week, with visitors, including a rocket engineer from the Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, working with the pupils. The week included a trip to the National Space Centre in Leicester.
- The school uses the primary sports funding effectively. Staff work alongside professional coaches to develop their own skills to deliver high quality physical education lessons. The school has increased the opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sport. Teams have taken part in a number of tournaments and pupils have enjoyed success in cross-country running events. During the year, all pupils have the opportunity to learn to swim or improve their water skills.
- The social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding of the pupils is very well developed. The school provides opportunities for older pupils to work alongside younger ones in family assemblies. In these sessions, pupils explore the themes such as 'Heroes' and values of self-worth such as 'Belonging'. The pupils have opportunities to find out about the beliefs and faiths of others in the school and the wider community. The school involves all and fosters good relationships across the school. Through its work, the school challenges any form of discrimination. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage in education and life in modern Britain.
- Parents are very supportive of the school. They say it is welcoming and teachers are available if they have any concerns. The school keeps parents informed about what the pupils are learning through parents' evenings and the school website.
- Systems to ensure pupils are well cared for and safe are robust and meet required statutory standards.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body know the school very well and hold the school to account for the achievement of the pupils. Governors are skilled in reviewing information the school holds on different groups of pupils and how this compares with the national picture. For example, governors check the progress made by those pupils with additional needs and those from disadvantaged backgrounds to ensure the extra support they receive is helping them to succeed. The governors are knowledgeable about how the school is working to improve the quality of teaching. They understand the link between any salary

improvement or promotion opportunities for teachers and the achievement of the pupils. Governors audit the financial position of the school very closely. Similarly, they check other sources of revenue, such as the primary sports funding, to make sure the school is making best use of its resources. Safeguarding and child protection procedures are reviewed to keep pupils safe when in school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They try hard in their lessons and are keen to do well. Their good attitudes make a positive contribution to their learning. They have good skills in working together. Staff are now beginning to plan activities that give pupils more opportunities to take greater responsibility for their own learning, for example through the greater use of project work set as homework tasks.
- Relationships in the classes are good. Pupils work well together and with the adults in school. Lessons have a very purposeful feel to them, with pupils usually well motivated and fully engaged in what they are doing.
- Around school, behaviour is generally good. Pupils do not always consider the consequences of their behaviour fully; for example, sometimes they can be too boisterous when playing together at break or lunchtimes.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they are well cared for and looked after by the adults in school.
- They have a clear understanding of what bullying is and insist there are few acts of unkindness between pupils. They say they know who to speak to if they are worried or if they need help resolving problems if they fall out with someone.
- The family assemblies provide opportunities for older pupils to work alongside younger ones. Pupils help each other and share ideas and opinions with others they would not usually work with. The school provides pupils with the chance to take on responsibilities within school. For example, Year 5 pupils act as road safety trainers to teach Year 2 how to behave when they are near roads.
- Attendance is above average. The school works hard to reduce pupil absence as far as possible.

The quality of teaching is good

- Overall teaching is effective and enables pupils to make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their different starting points.
- Teachers plan learning activities that follow logical sequences that build upon what has gone before. This provides a good structure for the pupils' learning. Lower ability pupils receive very effective support from teaching assistants and this helps them make good progress. The teaching assistants are active in the classroom and are confident to take a leading role in the lesson and this allows the teacher to focus on particular groups.
- At times, the challenge for more able pupils does not always enable them to achieve at the highest levels. Teachers' expectations of what they can do are not high enough. The activities teachers organise do not always have the necessary level of challenge and more able pupils commented that work can be too easy. For example Year 1 higher ability pupils wrote some very interesting firework poems but then moved onto a very simple cut-and-stick task that did not extend their skills. The school has recognised the need to provide the more able with more opportunities to work at the highest levels. Plans are in place for additional classes to boost achievement but they have not yet started.
- The school has worked to improve the quality of marking and feedback pupils receive on their work. Scrutiny of workbooks from this term shows that marking is improving and pupils now have better guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils in turn are responding to the feedback and making the necessary corrections. They are now beginning to review their partners' work and provide feedback comments to each other on how to improve their work.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- In 2014, the unvalidated information from Year 6 national tests showed the attainment of pupils in reading was in line with national averages. Attainment was slightly below in writing and mathematics. However, the progress pupils made from their individual starting points in Year 2 through to Year 6 was good in writing and mathematics. In reading, pupils' progress was significantly above the national expectations and was excellent. The proportions of pupils making at least expected progress were above national expectations. Scrutiny of pupils' workbooks indicated that their progress in writing and mathematics so far this term is better than last year.
- Pupils' attainment in Year 2 at the end of 2014 was well below national averages. The school can point to a unique set of circumstances that led up to these results. In the previous year, the school agreed to open a third class in Year 1, due to an increased demand for places in the area. A significant proportion of the new pupils came from non-English backgrounds and took longer to develop their skills and understanding, due to the language barrier. The school's own data show that these pupils are now making better progress. The pupils currently in Year 2 are already working at higher levels than expected for their age.
- Nearly three quarters of the pupils in Year 1 achieved the expected standard in the national phonics screening check. Pupils in school enjoy reading. Younger pupils quickly learn the sounds letters make. They are able to break unfamiliar words down into smaller chunks and blend the sounds together to read the word. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to read in their free time. Older pupils are able to come into their classroom to read quietly at lunchtime as an alternative to enjoying the playground activities. Year 6 pupils read with confidence and enjoyment and can talk at length about books they are currently reading.
- The school uses the additional funding it receives to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. In 2014, their skills and understanding compared with those of other pupils in the school in Year 6 were about one term behind in reading and writing and two terms behind in mathematics. When compared with national averages for pupils who were not disadvantaged, the gaps were half a term in reading, two terms in writing and just under three terms in mathematics. Across the school, these differences are beginning to close in different year groups.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. This is due to the very effective support provided through small group work and the help they receive in class from teaching assistants. School leaders at all levels are totally committed to ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to achieve well.
- The school recognises that the achievement of more able pupils could be higher, with too few in recent years gaining the higher levels in mathematics and writing. This is a focus for the school this year. Staff training is planned to improve the teachers' skills in providing the necessary additional challenge that these pupils need.
- Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or those who speak English as an additional language generally make good progress as they become more confident in using English. A number of their parents said they felt their children were enjoying school and, as a result, were learning well and making good progress.

The early years provision

is good

- Children join the school with a range of skills and abilities. They are assessed quickly and, through good teaching, quickly develop their reading, writing and speaking skills and their abilities to get along with each other. By the end of the Reception Year, nearly two thirds of the children have achieved a good level of development and all are ready to move into Year 1.
- Those who are more able have good opportunities to develop their writing skills. They are encouraged to write extended stories through making story-boards which they can then retell.
- There are excellent outdoor facilities to fire the children's imagination and sense of adventure with, for example, a sailing boat. The outdoor area allows children to develop their physical skills and creativity with larger pieces of equipment. The indoor space is warm and has a wide range of activities for the children to discover and enjoy.
- The children are keen to explore the activities on offer to them. They can talk at length about what they are doing and enjoy sharing what they have achieved.
- Links with parents are good. There are opportunities for them to talk informally with staff as well as weekly information letters. Parents have opportunities to stay and learn alongside their children.
- The early years leader has only been in post since September 2014 and, as with other middle leaders

new to their posts, she is currently developing in her role. As a result, the early years leader has yet to secure outstanding teaching in the Reception classes and accelerate children's achievement further. She has ensured that all of the staff work together as a strong team. They plan together so there is continuity between the two classes. Record keeping is thorough and the progress children make is carefully checked and used to plan the next learning activities.

- The children in the Reception classes are well looked after and are kept very safe.

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	139298
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	451044

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	371
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Amy Willson
Headteacher	Alex Pearson
Date of previous school inspection	not previously inspected
Telephone number	01295 263 067
Fax number	01295 263 068
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