

Harborne Primary School

Station Road, Harborne, Birmingham, B17 9LU

Inspection dates 11–12 December 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Early years provision		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Children get off to an excellent start in the outstanding Reception classes. They make rapid progress in all areas of their early development.
- All pupils benefit from outstanding teaching. They make excellent progress from the very beginning of Year 1 and reach very high standards by the end of Year 6.
- Any pupils in danger of falling behind in their work, or who find work difficult, are quickly identified and promptly supported so they too achieve very well.
- Teachers use information about pupils' previous learning extremely well to set demanding work for pupils at all ability levels.
- Teachers are highly effective in enabling pupils to make their own decisions about when to move on to the next steps in their learning. Pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves and choose the most difficult tasks they think they are capable of completing.
- The marking of pupils' work is excellent. Detailed tips help them to improve it. Teachers do not always make sure pupils gain maximum benefit by responding to their comments.
- Pupils behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school. They feel very safe in school and enjoy coming. Attendance is above average and pupils are punctual.
- Leaders make sure pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are extremely proud of their school and have excellent personal qualities.
- The school's leaders, including the governors, have very successfully created an environment in which high expectations and high standards are the norm.
- Leaders' regular and rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement have helped to ensure that both have improved since the last inspection.
- Governors are fully committed to the school and are extremely effective in holding senior leaders and staff to account. Their challenging questions have played an important part in helping staff to achieve an outstanding quality of education.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 25 lessons. Thirteen of the observations were carried out jointly with the principal, the head of school or an assistant headteacher. In addition inspectors completed 'learning walk' observations to get an overview of the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make), one-to-one and small group support for focus groups of pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and looked at the work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation, including the school's own judgements on its strengths and weaknesses, and the data it collects on pupils' progress. Documents detailing the school's arrangements for safeguarding were reviewed and discussed.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and pupils. A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Questionnaire responses from 23 members of staff were analysed.
- Inspectors took account of 97 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. They also talked to parents bringing their children to school and on the phone, and attended the Key Stage 1 Christmas performance to gather their views.

Inspection team

David Speakman, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Deborah Rogan	Additional Inspector
Elizabeth Needham	Additional Inspector
Mary Maybank	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in single-age classes, but in ability groups for mathematics in Years 2 to 6 and phonics in Years 1, 2 and 3. Children in Reception attend on a full-time basis.
- Just under half of the pupils are White British. Others come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups, the main group, at 15%, being Indian. A small minority, 22%, speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in the care of the local authority), at 15%, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average at 11%.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The principal, who works on a part-time basis, is a National Leader of Education (NLE) and provides support to vulnerable schools. The head of school is full time.
- The governors run a breakfast club on the school site, and it was included in this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils respond to the very detailed comments in teachers' marking of their work to further accelerate their progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- Staff are led exceptionally well by the principal and the head of school, and work as a highly effective team. Senior leaders have very high expectations of the work of all adults and have established a culture in which everyone, including pupils and staff, is expected to do their very best.
- Rigorous arrangements for checking teaching have moved teaching to an outstanding level since the school was last inspected. Leaders visit classrooms regularly, look at teachers' planning and check pupils' work to see that they are making good enough progress. Any areas identified for improvement are noted as priorities for development and followed up rapidly.
- Senior leaders keep a very detailed check on the progress of all pupils. Information on their progress is brought together to check pupils are meeting the demanding targets set for them. Staff are held accountable for the progress of their pupils in regular reviews with senior leaders.
- A carefully considered structure of leadership covers all aspects of the school's work. These arrangements are flexible and can be changed at appropriate times to meet changing demands. Phase, faculty and subject leaders have a highly positive impact on checking how well all staff are doing their jobs and how well pupils are progressing. For example, leaders recently responded to staffing difficulties affecting the progress of some pupil groups. A senior leader intervened by taking over the teaching of the affected groups and quickly enabled these pupils to get back on track.
- The outstanding curriculum promotes pupils' enthusiasm for learning through interesting topics, a wide range of after-school clubs and a good range of visits and visitors. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds say they find the learning experiences interesting and enjoyable. Leaders pay close attention to providing help and guidance as required to ensure that all have equal opportunity to succeed.
- Pupil premium funding is used very effectively to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils by providing high-quality one-to-one and small group support. The funding also assists individuals to attend school clubs and other events. The school builds the confidence and self-esteem of these pupils through the work of a pastoral manager.
- The school has made detailed and highly effective arrangements for spending the primary sports funding. It is used to widen opportunities for pupils to take part in sports activities, and to improve teachers' expertise through working with specialist coaches and arranging for staff to attend courses. Leaders monitor the impact of this spending and can demonstrate its impact through pupils' increased participation in sport and teachers' increased confidence in teaching physical education.
- The local authority regards the school as needing minimal support. It conducts one risk assessment each year, focusing on achievement. It does use the principal's NLE status to support more vulnerable schools, and has used other senior staff and subject leaders to do support work in other schools.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is promoted outstandingly well throughout the curriculum. Assemblies are used exceptionally well to promote the school's values and to reward pupils' best academic, sporting, musical and personal achievements. High standards are encouraged in everything the school does. Pupils learn to respect themselves and others, and this shows in the way pupils from different backgrounds work and play together harmoniously. The school ensures that pupils develop a strong awareness of living in a multicultural country and know all about British values. Pupils are encouraged to use their highly developed understanding of right and wrong to make sensible choices.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body works exceptionally well with senior leaders in maintaining a high quality of education. Governors are very well prepared for any change and plan actions in advance rather than reacting to situations. They have prepared a detailed action plan to monitor the work of the current leadership structure to ensure the school continues to function at a high level of performance.
 - Governors know in detail how well teachers are doing their jobs through regular visits and senior

leaders' detailed reports. They have full access to assessment data and have a secure understanding of what this means. They know how well the performance of pupils compares with other schools.

- They have good levels of relevant expertise and challenge senior leaders on school improvement. They are fully involved in strategic planning for development and their decisions are well informed. They set clear targets in managing the performance of the principal and staff, making sure teachers' pay increases are linked to their competence.
- The governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met, and that safeguarding arrangements are highly effective.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. This results in a safe and calm atmosphere in classrooms and around school. Pupils enjoy school and join in all activities enthusiastically. Most parents who stated a view indicated that the school makes sure that its pupils are well behaved. Pupils speak very positively about behaviour in school.
- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are of the highest quality. Pupils are keen to please. They work hard in lessons and take care to present their work very neatly and tidily. They take care over the site, buildings and learning resources, all of which are kept in an excellent condition.
- Pupils throughout the school have an exceptionally positive approach to learning. They attempt new work with confidence and with a determination to do their very best. From a very young age, they become adept at evaluating the success of their own learning and at identifying ways in which they might improve it, often without the guidance of an adult. This contributes enormously to their learning and to their excellent achievement.
- Attendance has improved and is above average. The school uses rigorous procedures to follow up absence and to discourage unauthorised absence.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils know what is safe and what is not. They feel very safe in school and say that their teachers would look after them if needed.
- Pupils know about the different types of bullying and what to do if they ever need help. Bullying is not a concern to them but they feel that should it ever happen, it would be dealt with straight away. Very few parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire showed any concern about this sort of unacceptable behaviour.
- Vulnerable pupils are cared for exceptionally well. Child protection processes are applied thoroughly and are effective. The school premises are kept secure and staff are rigorously checked before appointment. Safeguarding training for staff and governors is up to date.
- Pupils are very well cared for in the popular breakfast club. This has a positive impact on the health and nutrition, ability to socialise, and attendance and punctuality of those who attend.

The quality of teaching is outstanding

- Teaching is of a consistently high quality in all key stages, so pupils at all ages make excellent progress. Teachers show high expectations of what pupils are capable of doing and set demanding tasks. This is a feature common to all classes so pupils make continuously excellent progress from the very beginning.
- Outstanding teaching of reading, writing, and numeracy shows in high standards and excellent progress. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are still taught higher-order reading skills so they become very capable readers. They get lots of opportunity to solve problems in mathematics to deepen understanding and use their learning very effectively. Opportunities to write are numerous and cross over subjects so pupils become

very competent writers.

- Teachers use assessment information carefully to plan tasks to build on pupils' previous learning and make them very demanding, so pupils continue to make rapid progress.
- Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and thoroughly. Comments are specific and provide precise individual feedback to pupils so they know exactly how to improve their work. However, teachers do not always make sure pupils respond to the very valuable comments.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is very carefully monitored. Under revised classroom arrangements, they are taught exceptionally well through focused support, more detailed feedback, in small groups or through one-to-one support.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are taught very well by class teachers and teaching assistants. Early identification of their needs means support is provided from the earliest opportunity. In many cases this early support is so effective that they no longer need it as they move through the school. This means that the few older pupils supported generally have complex needs. They are carefully supported and monitored to ensure they make the best progress.

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children start the Reception Year with attainment that is broadly typical for their age. The weakest area is in communication, particularly their ability to understand language. They make excellent progress and by the time they move into Year 1, a large majority attain the early learning goals across all areas of learning. The percentage achieving a good level of development is much higher than the national average.
- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics, reflecting excellent achievement. Current school data show that pupils are continuing to make excellent progress this year.
- Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check are above average. The proportions of pupils achieving the required level are above all comparable groups nationally.
- Pupils achieve exceptionally well in Key Stage 2, especially in Years 5 and 6 where progress is particularly rapid. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has been consistently well above average year on year. There is no significant difference in attainment between different subjects. Standards in grammar, punctuation and spelling are consistently high.
- Pupils' high-level literacy and numeracy skills are evident in a wide range of subjects. The artwork on display is exceptionally good for pupils of this age. The school has a strong tradition of musical achievements, with different instrumental groups and an excellent choir. Pupils do very well in competitive sports.
- The most able pupils do exceptionally well. The percentages of pupils reaching the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average in both Key Stages 1 and 2. This is because they attempt work at a highly challenging level, which moves them on rapidly.
- Pupils from minority ethnic groups, including Indian pupils, achieve very well. Those who speak English as an additional language soon acquire enough English to access the full curriculum. From this point they make excellent progress and their attainment at least matches that of other pupils and in some cases exceeds it, particularly in mathematics.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs also make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics through effective and targeted support. Last year they exceeded nationally expected progress in all subjects. This year excellent progress can still be seen in lessons and in pupils' books.

- The 2014 test results indicated that disadvantaged pupils did not progress as well as other pupils, and failed to close the attainment gaps. In mathematics they were almost three years behind others in the school and five terms behind other pupils nationally. In reading the gaps were about a year and a half and a year, and in writing they were almost four terms and a term and a half. This situation was addressed decisively by rearranging teaching and support. Because other pupils' attainment in the school was at such high levels, they did not manage to close these gaps. However, they made rapid progress during Year 6 and reached the expected levels for their age in all subjects at the end of the year. Eligible pupils currently in the school continue to make the same excellent progress as other groups and are working at or above the levels expected for their ages.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Excellent leadership and very close teamwork have created an exciting and stimulating environment for children to learn in. Displays focusing on language, number, a range of topics and children's own work provide numerous sources of knowledge from which children can learn and develop pride in their achievements.
- Adults have a thorough knowledge of each child and provide a range of activities that cover all aspects of their development. There is a strong emphasis on learning through discovery and exploration. 'Missions' and 'challenges', such as planning a Christmas party, encourage children to find things out for themselves and use their learning in a practical way. Adults provide an excellent range of high-quality resources, both indoors and outside, to support all areas of learning.
- During adult-led activities, teaching is often inspirational. The pace of learning is rapid so children learn a great deal across a range of areas in a short time. Adults show very high expectations and move children on to the next steps in learning as soon as they are ready. They are very well prepared to join Year 1.
- Children's behaviour in the Reception classes is outstanding. They get on really well with each other and work harmoniously in small groups. They very quickly respond to adults' requests, for example to come together as a group or to clear up the work areas at the end of sessions. They listen politely to adults and to each other.
- Adults are vigilant about safety; children were completely safe and secure during all activities seen.

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	132261
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	448598

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	629
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Mackenzie
Principal	Mark Slater
Date of previous school inspection	15 October 2009
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