

# Hardy Mill Primary School

Hardy Mill Road, Harwood, Bolton, Lancs, BL2 4EF

**Inspection dates** 25–26 February 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- This happy, popular and successful school is a place where pupils flourish.
- The headteacher, very ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, provides determined and highly skilled leadership in improving all areas of the school.
- Morale is high and staff and governors work really closely as a team for the benefit of pupils and the whole school community.
- The range of subjects is rich and exciting. They are organised well and promote pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development very well.
- The school has extremely strong relationships with parents, the wider community and other schools.
- Governors offer rigorous challenge and support to senior leaders so that no stone is left unturned in improving the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils feel safe. They enjoy the excellent range of clubs and opportunities to take on responsibilities. They are proud of their school and are eager to learn, as shown by their above average and improving attendance.
- Pupils have extremely positive relationships with staff. This helps pupils to try their best and develop mutual respect.
- Teaching is usually good and sometimes outstanding. As a result, pupils learn well.
- Pupils in the majority of year groups make good progress. Standards across the school are rising. By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards that are usually above average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children in the early years achieve well and sometimes outstandingly so from their different starting points. This is a result of effective provision, including a highly stimulating and caring environment and consistently good teaching.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is some variability in the progress made across the year groups and achievement is not as good in writing as it is in reading and mathematics.
- Sometimes pupils, in particular the most able, are not always given work that is demanding enough.
- Pupils do not always receive clear guidance on how to improve their writing when working across subjects.
- The role of middle leaders, including those who are new, in checking on the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils, is not yet fully embedded.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the learning of pupils in all classes across school.
- The inspectors checked closely on pupils' work in lessons, in books and on display around school. They also spoke to pupils both formally and informally about their views of school. Inspectors listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors looked very closely at the records kept by the school on the progress of pupils and their behaviour.
- Inspectors made a careful check on a range of school documentation, including the school's own view of its performance and plans for improvement.
- Discussions were held with a range of school leaders including, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. Inspectors met governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors also checked on the work of governors and documents, particularly those relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through checking the results from the school's own surveys of parental opinion and the 51 responses to Parent View, the on-line survey and the 97 responses to the school's own recent survey. Inspectors also considered written information from parents.
- The inspectors took account of the views of staff expressed in the 19 responses to the voluntary questionnaire. The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.

## Inspection team

Chris Maloney, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Machell

Additional Inspector

Steve Rigby

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There have been significant changes in staff and governors since the last inspection, including the appointment of the current headteacher in January 2014 and a change in the Chair of the Governing Body.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A very small proportion of pupils is from other ethnic backgrounds and cultural traditions or speaks English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through pupil premium funding is below average. This additional government funding is provided for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school has a full-time Reception class and a part-time Nursery which offers wraparound care.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has a number of awards, including the Healthy School Award.
- The school works in close partnership with the local authority Behaviour Support Service.
- There is a private before-school club on site, which is subject to separate inspection.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise the achievement of pupils, particularly in writing, by ensuring that:
  - teachers consistently plan work that matches the abilities of all pupils, particularly the most able
  - comments in teachers' marking make it clear to pupils how to improve their writing skills in other subjects and they have time to respond.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - ensuring that middle leaders, particularly those new to role, are more effective in checking on the success of their actions to improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has very effectively empowered strong team work and an inspiring vision for improvement during a period of significant changes in staff and governors. By galvanising the whole school community and raising expectations of what pupils can and should achieve, the school is improving the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- Discussions with staff reflect their full commitment to the headteacher's vision for continuous improvement and the promotion of a culture where the needs of the whole child are paramount. A typical staff comment was, 'We are all working together for the same goal; the very best for the children.' Morale is high because staff are very well supported in improving their work and they feel that their efforts are appreciated.
- Senior leaders demonstrate a clear and accurate understanding of just how well the school is doing and have precisely targeted plans to improve the quality of teaching and achievement of pupils. This has led to improvements in the achievement of current pupils across school.
- Senior leaders regularly check on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and give staff clear guidance on how to improve the effectiveness of their work. They ensure that staff have a wealth of opportunities to access training and observe colleagues in school and in other schools.
- Regular and rigorous checks are made by senior leaders on the progress of all groups of pupils across school and decisive action taken to provide precisely targeted support to those in danger of underachieving. Senior leaders ensure that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively in helping them progress as well as others in school. Although at times the most able do not always make rapid progress, the overall promotion of equal opportunities to learn is good. Good relationships are fostered well and discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- Middle leaders, including those new to role, enthusiastically support the focus on continuous improvement and are eager to improve their impact on the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils. However, they are not yet fully effective in checking on the impact of any changes made.
- School leaders have successfully linked subjects in a very creative and stimulating range of carefully chosen topics, such as Rotten Romans or World Kitchen. Pupils enjoy a wide range of visits, visitors and residentials and relish the opportunity they have to learn French.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and well supported by themed events such as 'Diversity Week'. There are excellent links with an orphanage in Nepal, brought alive by pupils 'skyping' children for question-and answer-sessions. These activities help pupils to appreciate and celebrate different cultures and traditions. The very effective promotion of British values assists in strengthening pupils' tolerance and respect for the rule of law. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The school uses the additional funding for physical education and sport very well. The appointment of a specialist teacher has improved staff confidence and expertise and increased opportunities for pupils to develop skills and participation in additional clubs and competitive sports, such as gymnastics and hockey.
- Very strong links exist with parents. A typical parent comment was 'The care and support the whole staff have shown my daughter and all the family has been wonderful.'
- The local authority has provided good quality support in helping to check on the accuracy of school judgements and staff and governor training. Strong links with the local authority Behaviour Support Service have helped to ensure that pupils make the best of the learning opportunities on offer.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body challenges and supports the headteacher and other senior leaders very effectively and ensures that they are held to account for how well the school is doing. Governors know the school in depth and visit often. They are led particularly well by the Chair of Governors and are fully committed to improving their effectiveness. Governors have canvassed the views of staff, parents and pupils to check that the school is doing all it can to continuously improve. They are very well trained and have checked that they have the most effective range of skills, expertise and experience. Regular checks are made to ensure that teachers' pay progression is rigorously linked to improving pupils' progress and the quality of teaching and that pay rewards are appropriate. Governors keep a close eye on school finances. Really effective use of extra funding for physical education and sport has been made and its impact tracked. Governors carry out particularly close checks on policy and practice to be confident that safeguarding arrangements are effective and meet requirements.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good****Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite, friendly, considerate and welcoming to visitors. Pupils are proud of their school. A typical pupil comment was, 'Anyone coming here would see that our school is a joyful and happy place.' Pupils' enjoyment in learning is reflected in their above average and rising attendance.
- They have exceptionally positive relationships with staff. Trusting relationships are built on mutual respect. Pupils know staff care about them because the adults work hard to get to know all pupils as individuals. This boosts pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence well and helps them to try hard.
- Pupils get on well with each other and respect other cultures and faiths and the rights to hold different beliefs. As one pupil said, 'We are all equal with the same rights. It's ok to be different and believe different things but you should never harm anyone else.'
- Pupils enjoy the many opportunities they have to take on responsibility, including the school council and playground leaders. They also relish the exciting range of clubs such as hockey, choir, drama and basketball, taking part in team competitions such as in gymnastics, trips and residential to Robin Wood.
- When work is challenging and captures their imagination, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are outstanding. However, when planned activities do not meet their learning needs sufficiently well, a few pupils sometimes lose concentration and drift off task, slowing their progress.

**Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know about how to stay safe and keep others safe. They have a particularly good understanding of the possible danger of strangers and know how to avoid dangers on the Internet.
- Pupils understand what constitutes bullying and the different forms it can take, such as cyber-bullying and bullying as a result of prejudice. They say that bullying is not a problem in school, but are confident that staff deal with it fairly on the rare occasions it does happen.
- Parents' responses in Parent View and the school's own surveys show they are confident that their children feel safe and are kept safe.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- The excellent relationships staff have with pupils reflect the school's focus on meeting the needs of the whole child. All staff pride themselves on getting to know the pupils extremely well. They use this information effectively to motivate pupils and encourage them to be confident learners.
- Teachers regularly check on how well pupils are learning and adapt tasks in the light of what the information is telling them. Teachers and teaching assistants use their good subject knowledge to challenge pupils' thinking and prompt further learning. They provide pupils with lists showing what they need to be successful in the lesson. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own learning and that of other pupils. However, teachers are not always successful in planning tasks that precisely stretch and challenge the abilities of all pupils, particularly the most able, sometimes hindering the progress they make.
- Staff manage the behaviour and attitudes of pupils successfully. They make sure that pupils know what is expected of them in following the agreed set of 'rights and responsibilities' across school, including the 'right to learn'. Staff also make skilled use of the school behaviour system based on colours, such as 'it's good to be green' and striving for gold to motivate and reward pupils.
- Reading is taught effectively. Staff ensure that skills are taught systematically alongside developing pupils' love of reading. Any pupils who need extra help are given skilled support from well-trained teaching assistants.
- Pupils are given many opportunities to talk about their writing and extend their writing skills in highly creative activities. As a result, the quality of writing is improving. There are some excellent examples of marking in English and mathematics that helps pupils understand exactly what to do to improve their work and checks that they have done so accurately. However, this is not consistently evident when pupils are applying their writing skills across subjects and this is hindering their achievement.
- Teachers ensure that pupils have an increasing mastery of mathematical concepts through lots of practical activities and probing questioning to reinforce understanding. Teaching assistants are deployed well to check on pupils' understanding and consolidate basic skills.
- When work is precisely matched to the needs and interests of pupils, their enjoyment in learning and

eagerness to improve is clear to see. This was evident in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, where the most-able pupils in particular were fully engrossed in calculating in decimals and percentages, the damage done to various parts of a robot that was out of control on Mars.

### **The achievement of pupils** is good

- Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are usually above average and sometimes significantly so. Pupils make at least good progress from their different starting points. Checks on the work and progress of current pupils in school and records of progress of all groups of pupils over time show that they are achieving well, particularly in mathematics and reading and attainment is rising.
- Attainment in writing is not as high as in reading and mathematics and the proportion of pupils exceeding expected progress is not as strong across school. Although the achievement of current pupils shows some variability between year groups, overall the achievement of pupils is improving. The proportion of pupils now reaching the higher levels of attainment, particularly in Years 2 and 6, and the number of pupils exceeding the progress expected of them across classes is increasing.
- Progress in writing is good. Pupils relish the increasingly creative and highly stimulating opportunities to improve their writing. Their writing often shows really thoughtful development of ideas and skilled use of language, such as in Year 4 when pupils were inspired to write a report about 'Creative Week' for the school website, 'The wall of art, which was flamboyant and bold, was the best I had ever seen'. When pupils are writing in other subjects, teachers do not always point out how to improve their errors and this slows their progress.
- Pupils make good progress in developing their spelling, punctuation and grammar as a result of skilled teaching and the opportunities to check their work and share it with a partner to see how it could be improved further.
- Pupils show a genuine love of reading. This is well promoted throughout school by successful systematic teaching of skills, regular reading at home and the inspirational use of books and story characters throughout school. Pupils who need extra help are quickly given the additional support they need from well-trained teaching assistants. The results in the Year 1 national screening check on reading in 2014 were above average, reflecting their good understanding of the sounds that letters make. Pupils continue to develop their skills and understanding well as they move through school.
- In mathematics, pupils show a secure understanding of the concepts and basic skills due to skilled teaching, regular revision and a great deal of practical work. They apply these with increasing confidence when solving problems. Pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) resources confidently and accurately to support their work, such as when Year 2 pupils were learning how to write simple computer programmes.
- The progress of the most-able pupils is good. Most teachers provide pupils with more demanding work to challenge their abilities and deepen their understanding. However, this approach is not yet consistent across school, especially in writing.
- The few pupils from minority ethnic groups, including the few who speak English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, make good and sometimes outstanding progress, because of the skilled and sensitive support they receive.
- In Year 6 in 2014, there were too few disadvantaged pupils supported by the additional funding to draw any significant conclusions. Although there is some variability, the work of these pupils in all classes in school and records of their progress show that most are achieving as well and sometimes better than others in class.

### **The early years provision** is good

- Children settle quickly and thrive due to highly caring staff, well-established routines, a stimulating learning environment, consistently good or better teaching and the strong links with parents. As a result, all children, including the most able and those with special educational needs, make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their different starting points, which are usually typical for their age. Children are increasingly well prepared for learning in Year 1.
- The indoor and outdoor learning environments are organised very well, providing children with exciting opportunities to flow freely between them to follow their interests and extend their learning. The staff prompt, encourage and model the use of equipment to promote high quality learning. Children particularly enjoy exploring their learning in the 'Mud Kitchen' and digging up a worm to go in a pie.

- Children have good opportunities to talk about their learning. They eagerly chatter about their work, and negotiate and explain what they are doing, such as when splashing in puddles and building the ark out of large building blocks. Good quality resources are used well to support the many opportunities for the development of reading and writing, such as making cards for the Chinese New Year or writing menus for stir fry meals. Children eagerly count to target numbers such as 9 to 19, both forwards and backwards and demonstrate confidence in playing a higher than and lower than game or subtracting two to share the correct amount. The speed of challenging questioning retained the children's interest.
- Staff demonstrate a clear understanding of how children learn and use this extremely well to capture children's interests and extend their learning. They provide a skilled range of learning activities that children choose for themselves or are led by adults. Staff make very detailed observations of what children can achieve and their attitudes to learning to ensure that individual children have opportunities to make the most of activities on offer. As a result, children develop their early reading, writing and mathematical skills well, particularly in building confident recognition of the sounds that letters make.
- The behaviour of children is good and sometimes outstanding. They listen attentively, play co-operatively share equipment safely and sensibly and demonstrate good perseverance, such as when working together to build a space craft. Children show a good awareness of personal safety and how to keep others safe.
- The leadership of the early years is strong. The leader has a very clear understanding of strengths and areas for further development and shares the whole school vision for continuous improvement and strong team-working. Children are kept safe through a well-organised environment, detailed risk assessments and ensuring that all staff are well trained.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105189
<b>Local authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	448275

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	303
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Hall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jo Briggs
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 July 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01204 333770
<b>Fax number</b>	Not applicable
<b>Email address</b>	office@hardymill.bolton.sch.uk

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