

Harwell Primary School

The Styles, Harwell, Didcot, OX11 0LH

Inspection dates 16–17 April 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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

- Although there have been recent improvements in the quality of teaching, leaders and governors have not yet secured sustained improvement for all groups of pupils.
- Newly appointed subject and middle leaders have not had sufficient time or training to carry out their management roles. As a result, the impact of these leaders is not yet fully effective in improving teaching and raising achievement.
- Teachers do not all have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve and do not set work which challenges them, especially the most able. Consequently, pupils do not make consistently good progress in reading, writing and particularly in mathematics. Attainment is broadly average but too few pupils reach the higher levels.
- Teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve practical problems.
- The early years' provision requires improvement because the outdoor classroom does not provide children with enough opportunities for developing and extending their learning.
- Leaders in the early years' provision do not always make enough use of the assessment information they have on children to monitor their progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The recently appointed headteacher has set high expectations for all pupils. As a result, the school is beginning to improve.
- Governance has been re-vitalised. Governors now support the headteacher well and are becoming an effective force in improving the quality of pupils' learning.
- The very large majority of parents are supportive of the school. They recognise and appreciate the improvements that have taken place recently.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are keen to learn and they get on well with each other. They feel safe in school and they have a good understanding of how to keep safe in different situations.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well, and they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in 14 lessons or parts of lessons. A number of lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- On the first day of the inspection the Year 6 class were out of school for the day on an educational visit.
- The inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met a group of pupils to gain their views of the school. The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and at the end of the school day, as well as in lessons. They attended an assembly.
- The inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including: assessments and records of pupils' progress; the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance; records of how teaching is managed; and the school improvement plans.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and other staff, including senior and subject leaders. The lead inspector met with three governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. He had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors took account of the 53 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, talked to parents at the beginning and end of the school day and considered letters from parents. They also looked at the 21 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Adam Hewett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Michael Sutherland-Harper

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Harwell Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the Reception class attend full time.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those who are supported by the pupil premium funding) is below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average compared to similar schools nationally.
- After-school provision operates on the school site but is privately run and is, therefore, inspected separately and not included in this inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher was appointed in February 2014 and took up the post in September 2014.
- Several staff have left the school during the past two terms and there have been some difficulties in recruiting suitable staff. The leaders of the key stages have only recently been appointed to their posts.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better, and raise pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - all teachers have sufficiently high expectations of what all pupils can and should achieve
 - the most-able pupils are set work that challenges and extends their learning
 - teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills and knowledge to solve practical problems.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that teachers with leadership responsibilities have sufficient time and training to develop their skills in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils are making.
- Improve provision in the early years by ensuring that:
 - leaders make accurate use of the assessment information that is available to them to enable all children to make at least good progress
 - the outdoor classroom is developed further to provide a rich and exciting range of learning activities for the children.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management **require improvement**

- Leadership and management require improvement because pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching over time, although improving, have not been good. Until recently, the expectations from school leaders of what all pupils could and should achieve have not been sufficiently high. There has not been a strong focus on improving the quality of teaching and, as a result, not all pupils attained the standards of which they were capable.
- Although the headteacher has been in post for only a short period of time, he has already identified as his main priority improving teaching so that all pupils can make good progress as they move through the school. He has made headway in developing more consistent approaches to teaching across the classes and this is starting to accelerate pupils' progress, particularly in reading and writing. He is creating a school culture where good teaching is expected, if not yet fully achieved, and pupils behave consistently well.
- The middle leadership team is not fully effective as these staff are at an early stage in developing a systematic way to evaluate the quality of pupils' work. Recently appointed subject and other leaders, including in the early years, have not yet had sufficient time or training to observe colleagues' classroom practice, in order to improve the quality of teaching. However, they have identified a number of key areas for development and this has resulted, for example, in significant improvements in the teaching of reading across the school.
- Senior leaders have shown a determination to improve the quality and consistency of teaching and the progress of pupils. They now make regular observations of the quality of teaching and pupils' learning and analyse progress data. Leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate and is used to produce clear plans for improvement.
- School leaders have remodelled the curriculum so that it is broad and balanced, more effectively meets the needs of the pupils and engages their interest. For example, pupils in Year 6 planned for and created their own business which allowed them to use skills they had learnt in writing and mathematics. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils in all classes to use and apply their mathematical skills to solve problems. All pupils have the opportunity to play a musical instrument through whole-class lessons and this helps them to develop their cultural awareness. The school is working with other local primary schools in planning for implementation of new methods for assessment following the discontinuation of National Curriculum levels.
- There is an inclusive ethos in the school. The headteacher and other staff promote school values of tolerance, honesty and respect regularly. This prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain, as well as fostering good relations, and is reflected in their good behaviour. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and this helps to ensure that they respect the differences between people.
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is now being used effectively. Teachers and other staff have received training in how to identify and meet the needs of these pupils. Individual and one-to-one support in reading and mathematics provided by trained teachers and teaching assistants for all eligible pupils is now provided. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make progress that is now in line with that of others in school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs now achieve in line with other pupils in school because they receive well-planned individual support. Gaps in the performance of different groups of pupils in school are closing. This reflects the school's commitment to equal opportunities for all pupils.
- The school has used the additional primary physical education and sport premium well to increase pupils' participation in a range of sports and to develop staff confidence and skills in leading these activities. Pupils' opportunities for involvement in competitive sport against other schools have been extended and the school has gained success in representing the county in an inter-school football competition.
- Child protection and safeguarding arrangements have been strengthened during this academic year and are now robust and meet statutory requirements.
- The local authority recognised that achievement needed to be improved and has provided good support to the school in strengthening leadership through the support and advice of an experienced headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body has carried out two reviews of its effectiveness and has taken advice from a National Leader of Governance to identify how it could improve. This has led to changes in its membership and how it operates. The Chair of the Governing Body took up the post at the start of this academic year and provides strong leadership. As a result, the governing body is now an effective force

in setting high levels of challenge for improvement.

- Governors have developed an accurate understanding of how pupils' achievement compares with national standards and recognise that in the past progress for many pupils has not been good enough. They use the published data on progress and attainment and the headteacher's reports to compare pupils' performance with that in other schools.
- Governors make regular visits to the school to check on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, and use these visits to identify future development needs.
- Governors have a very clear understanding of how the resources available to the school, including the additional pupil premium funding, are used and monitor their impact and effectiveness.
- Governors have a good understanding of the link between teachers' pay increases and pupils' progress but only recently have increases in salary been aligned with teaching quality or how well pupils achieve.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are welcoming to visitors and are polite and courteous to one another and to adults alike.
- The school has a well-developed behaviour policy that is consistently applied. Pupils understand the expectations for behaviour, have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong and recognise that their actions could affect other people.
- Pupils respond quickly to teachers' instructions and show positive attitudes towards their learning. They are keen to participate in lessons and use their speaking and listening skills well to take part in meaningful discussions about their work. However, when teaching is less effective, some pupils, including some who are the most able, do not always concentrate well enough on learning to make the best progress.
- Pupils are keen to celebrate each other's success. They recognise and acknowledge it through thoughtful comments about each other's work and through whole-school assemblies where pupils receive certificates that identify individual achievements.
- Around school, behaviour is good and pupils get on well with each other. Pupils play together sensibly on the playgrounds. Older pupils look after younger ones. They behave well in the dining room and when moving around the school.
- The school has good systems in place to ensure that pupils arrive at school on time, ready to learn. Attendance has risen and is now just above average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a wide range of situations. Children in Reception are encouraged to take part in physical activities, including climbing trees, but are effectively taught about what the risks are and how to minimise them. Water safety is promoted well through swimming lessons for all pupils at the school's own swimming pool.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school because they know that the staff care for them. Pupils know about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying. They say that any type of bullying is rare and are confident that when it does occur, teachers and other adults deal with and resolve the issues quickly and competently.
- All staff and the very large majority of parents who responded on Parent View agree that pupils are safe in school.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because inconsistencies over time have meant that not all groups of pupils have made good progress from their different starting points. It is now improving following clear guidance from the headteacher and support from the local authority. Any previously inadequate teaching has now been removed.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can and should achieve have not been consistently high enough. There has not been a clear understanding among teachers of what pupils should achieve in all the curriculum subjects by the time they leave primary school.
- The most-able are not always challenged to think more deeply during their lessons. Teachers do not always set these pupils work that is sufficiently challenging. In lessons they sometimes have to complete

tasks that are too easy for them before moving on to harder work and this limits their progress.

- The teaching of mathematics has improved and there is now a consistent approach to teaching calculation skills which is generally effective. However, pupils are given too few opportunities to apply their knowledge to solve problems or to make decisions for themselves on which processes are needed to do so.
- Until recently there was not a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics, (letters and the sounds they represent). A whole-school approach has now been introduced and all staff have had training to ensure they are confident in accurately teaching early reading skills. This has resulted in improvements in this aspect of teaching and pupils are now making better progress in reading.
- The school has recently introduced a common approach to assessing pupils' progress. Opportunities for teachers to meet together to compare their judgements are being developed. However, this practice has not been applied long enough to ensure pupils make good progress over time.
- Pupils make better progress and achieve higher standards in writing because teachers provide them with good opportunities to write extended pieces of work and focus on ensuring that punctuation and spelling are accurate.
- A whole-school marking policy is in place and teachers mark pupils' work regularly and provide clear guidance on what the next steps in learning should be. Pupils are provided with individual targets for improvement in writing and mathematics and use these to assess how well they are doing.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to support the learning of pupils who need extra help. This includes disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. Extra help is provided in the classroom or in individual and small-group sessions.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The progress pupils make across the school has not been consistently good enough to ensure that they all reach the levels of which they are capable. The proportion of pupils making expected or better than expected progress in reading and mathematics has been below average for the past two years.
- In 2014, pupils in Year 6 made faster progress in writing, with the very large majority of pupils making at least the expected progress. The proportions of pupils making better-than-expected progress were higher than those seen nationally in writing. However, too few pupils made better-than-expected progress in reading and mathematics. Progress is not consistent across other year groups and, as a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.
- Pupils' attainment in national tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly average. In 2014, the standards reached by pupils in reading and mathematics had fallen from the previous year. School data indicate that pupils currently in Year 6 will achieve standards that are broadly average in all subjects.
- Pupils in Year 2 achieved the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics in the 2014 national tests but these had fallen from the previous year when they were above average.
- Work in pupils' books, school data and other evidence gathered during the inspection indicate that progress across different classes and year groups is not consistently good. While pupils currently in Year 6 are making at least the progress that is expected of them in reading and writing, this is not the case for all other pupils.
- Progress in mathematics is weaker than in reading and writing across the school but the proportion of pupils making at least the expected progress from their individual starting points is increasing as a result of the actions taken by the new headteacher. Pupils now have more secure knowledge of calculation skills and attainment is starting to rise. However, the lack of opportunity to apply these skills to solve problems means that their progress is not as good as it could be.
- Standards reached by the most-able pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have not been high enough over time. The most-able pupils make similar progress to that of their classmates. They do not make consistently good progress across subjects because they are sometimes asked to do tasks that are too easy.
- In the Year 1 national phonics check, fewer pupils reach the expected level than the national figure. Results had risen slightly in 2014. There is now greater accuracy and consistency in teaching early reading skills and this has resulted in improved standards across the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils have not made consistently good progress over time. Their progress has been typically lower than that of other pupils at the school and other pupils nationally from their starting points. However, the additional support that the school has put in place this year and the increased awareness that all staff now have of their needs and potential have resulted in a narrowing of the gaps in attainment

of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils at the school. Disadvantaged pupils are now making progress that is at least in line with that of other pupils.

- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were three terms behind their classmates in writing and one term behind all pupils nationally. They were seven terms behind their classmates and all pupils nationally in reading. In mathematics, they were four terms behind their classmates and seven terms behind all pupils nationally.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has been slower than that of other pupils in the past. The school has improved systems for identifying what support is required to help these pupils overcome any barriers to learning and makes sure that they receive the help that is required. This is leading to faster progress and pupils currently in school are now making progress that is at least in line with other pupils nationally. This reflects the school's success in promoting equality of opportunity and in avoiding discrimination.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- Children start the Reception Year with skills and knowledge that are slightly below those that are typical for their age. In 2014, the school's records show that the proportion of children who reached a good level of development was below national performance. In this respect, children are not as well prepared as they could be when they start Year 1. Too few have the early reading, writing and mathematics skills they need in Year 1. They make better progress in language and communication, and in personal, social and emotional development. Children who are disabled or have special educational needs achieve in line with their peers.
- Adults within the early years' provision have improved the indoor classroom which provides a secure, safe and stimulating environment that supports all the areas of learning. Children respond enthusiastically and enjoy the learning activities within the classroom. However, the outdoor area has not yet been developed well enough for children to experience a sufficiently wide range of activities and extend their learning.
- Leadership of the early year's provision requires improvement because, as yet, leaders have not had sufficient opportunities or training to observe colleagues' classroom practice, in order to improve the quality of teaching. Leaders do not always make sufficient use of the assessment information that is available to monitor children's progress and this slows the pace of learning for some children.
- Teachers work well with other support staff to ensure that activities interest and engage the children. Children are encouraged to listen with concentration and have developed good communication skills.
- The teaching of early reading is effective with staff leading children in their development of phonics skills and encouraging a deep interest in books. For example, during the inspection, following the reading of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, children were keen to act out different characters from the story.
- Children behave well. They learn to share equipment and take turns, and are kind towards each other. Routines are well established and children quickly learn to listen to and follow instructions. They are able to work and play in a safe and harmonious environment. Children's health, safety and well-being are effectively promoted.
- Parents work closely with staff in the Reception classes and their contributions in assisting the children's learning are valued. Arrangements for sharing information on children's progress with parents are good and parents value and appreciate the care that is taken to make sure that the children make a positive and happy start at school.

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	123062
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	462380

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	162
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Waters
Headteacher	Bryn Gibson
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2013
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