

Harlands Primary School

Mallard Drive, Uckfield, TN22 5PW

Inspection dates 28–29 April 2015

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------|
| | 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.

- The achievement of pupils and the quality of teaching have improved significantly since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher and other leaders have successfully implemented their detailed plans to raise standards at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- There has been a marked improvement in governance, which is now a strength. Governors check for themselves how well the school is doing and hold leaders to account to make continuous improvements.
- Reading has a high status in the school and, as a result, standards in this subject area are higher than in other subjects.
- Previous gaps in attainment between girls and boys have been closed at the end of each key stage.
- Current pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are now making more rapid progress than in previous years.
- The most-able pupils make better progress than their peers nationally.
- The school takes effective action to ensure that children are safe.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They have a positive attitude towards learning and enjoy coming to school. This is demonstrated by their good attendance.
- Children make a good start to school life in the early years provision. Good links with the on-site nursery and parents enable a smooth transition to school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In recent years, pupils have not performed well enough in the Year 1 phonics (the sounds linked to letters) check.
- The teaching and marking of spelling are inconsistent, leading to weaker achievement in this area of English.
- Sometimes learning time is wasted when pupils are not moved on to suitably challenging tasks quickly enough.
- Not all teaching assistants have the skills to check how well pupils are doing with their work or the ability to adjust tasks where necessary.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 15 lessons. Five of these lessons were observed together with the headteacher. The lead inspector also made two shorter visits to classrooms with the headteacher to look at pupils' workbooks.
- Inspectors held meetings and discussions with the headteacher and various other school leaders. An inspector also met with the Chair of the Governing body and three other governors and had a telephone discussion with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors held informal discussions with various groups of pupils around the school and also met more formally with a group of pupils to discuss their views of the school. Inspectors heard pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 read.
- Inspectors scrutinised many documents relating to governance, including the review of governance carried out following the previous inspection and the subsequent action plan. They also examined various school documents relating to performance management, pay progression, pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching, safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors considered the responses of 69 parents to the Parent View questionnaire and spoke to some parents at the school gate at the beginning of the inspection.
- Inspectors also analysed the 27 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Lee Selby, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sue Hillman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- Pupils are taught in seven single-age classes. Each class, apart from Year 6, has more boys than girls.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are currently no pupils on roll for whom English is an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils entitled to additional funding through the pupil premium is much lower than the national average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for disadvantaged pupils, such as those eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the average figure found nationally.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Early years provision comprises one full-time Reception class. The school also manages a private nursery on site that was not part of this inspection.
- The school works in partnership with five other schools in the Uckfield Town Alliance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the achievement of pupils in the development of their phonics and spelling skills by:
 - reviewing the organisation of phonics teaching in the early years and Key Stage 1
 - providing further training for staff, including teaching assistants
 - agreeing a consistent approach to the teaching and marking of spelling in Key Stage 2.
- Improve teaching so that it is typically outstanding by:
 - using time effectively so that pupils are moved on to challenging tasks more quickly
 - ensuring all teaching assistants have the skills to check how well pupils are doing with their work and the ability to adjust tasks where necessary so that pupils make rapid progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has brought about a more thorough and rigorous approach to the management of the school. As a result of this, a culture of high expectations has led to improvements in pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching while maintaining the good levels of behaviour and safety recognised at the previous inspection.
 - Leaders have implemented detailed improvement plans and now make regular checks on the quality of teaching and pupils' work. This has enabled them to evaluate the school's work accurately.
 - Middle leaders such as the subject leaders for English and mathematics have been effective in raising standards in their subject areas. They analyse how well pupils are doing to find gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. They then implement specific actions to make improvements, for example by purchasing additional practical resources to aid mathematical understanding. They regularly check the impact of their actions and plan further priorities accordingly.
 - Pupils explain that the curriculum is interesting because the 'learning journey' topic approach allows them to develop and apply their skills in a number of different subject areas around a common theme such as 'the secret garden'. Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Inspectors agreed that the current curriculum stimulates the interest of both boys and girls well. They also agreed with a few pupils who felt that there could be more opportunities for them to take part in art, music and physical activities.
 - School leaders ensure that the additional funding provided through the pupil premium is used effectively to ensure that a greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils are now making more rapid progress.
 - The primary sports grant has been used successfully to improve resources and participation including in a range of sports new to the school such as tag-rugby and boccia. Leaders and governors agree that the next step is to spend more of the funding on training for teachers to improve their skills and confidence when teaching the full range of physical activities.
 - The school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind. One very minor issue of name calling in the last two years was dealt with swiftly and effectively by school leaders. Pupils, staff and parents get along well because the school does all it can to foster good relationships and ensure there is equality of opportunity for all. Parents agree that the school is well led and the overwhelming majority would recommend the school to others.
 - The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements and are effective.
 - The local authority provided good support to the school following the outcome of the previous inspection. The level of support has decreased as the school has shown sustainable improvement.
 - The school is a member of the Uckfield Town School Alliance. The work with this group of schools has allowed leaders and governors to share best practice across schools and use the skills of colleagues to evaluate improvements within the school. The majority of pupils move on to the secondary school within this alliance, which ensures there is a smooth transition for pupils when they leave Harlands.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governance has improved markedly and is now a strength of the school. Governors acted upon the suggestions from the external review of governance that was recommended at the time of the previous inspection. They have reconstituted the board and have ensured the existing members have the necessary skills and expertise to hold the school to account for the improvements needed. They have commissioned further external reviews to assess their current effectiveness and to drive further improvement.
 - Governors know about the quality of teaching and the performance of pupils, showing an in-depth understanding of how well different groups of pupils are doing. They ensure the curriculum meets the needs of pupils and prepares them well for life in modern Britain.
 - They ensure that performance management systems are rigorous and that only those teachers who are performing well are rewarded through pay progression. They ensure that any underperformance is tackled. They monitor the spending of the pupil premium grant for disadvantaged pupils and ensure that this is being used effectively to narrow any gaps in achievement.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are well behaved and attentive in class. They are proud of their work and ensure it is presented neatly. They work well with partners and in small groups. Occasionally, some younger children lose attention, usually as a result of insufficiently stimulating teaching and activities.
- Behaviour around the school during the inspection was good. Pupils are very polite and welcoming. School records indicate that this is normal and there are very few instances of poor behaviour logged. Pupils, staff and parent questionnaires confirm that this is the case.
- Pupils enjoy taking on a range of responsibilities both in their class and around the school, such as being school councillors, playtime buddies or e-safety ambassadors.
- Attendance is good and persistent absence is very low, indicating that pupils enjoy coming to school.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because pupils are not yet able to take responsibility for extending their own learning and challenging themselves to improve in class.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Parents almost unanimously agree that pupils are safe and well looked after at this school.
- School staff all have relevant and up-to-date child protection training and the school has good links with other agencies. Recruitment checks are carried out in line with statutory requirements.
- Internet safety has a high priority in the school and this is shared with families through the school's website. Through regular assemblies and taking part in Safer Internet Day, pupils know how to stay safe online.
- Bullying is very rare at Harlands. Pupils say that sometimes issues arise when best friends are not getting along but the pupil friendship buddies are very good at sorting this out quickly.
- Staff carry out comprehensive risk assessments to ensure that precautions are taken to keep pupils safe during activities on the school site and on school trips.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Leaders have driven these improvements. They have acted on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection while also rightly promoting a consistency of approach across the school.
- Classrooms all have useful resources. These include word banks, writing prompts and mathematical equipment and vocabulary displays that promote learning in English and mathematics well. Teachers also use a consistent approach to sharing the objectives for lessons with pupils and letting them know what they will have to do to be successful.
- Teachers use information from tests and assessments well to ensure they plan activities that enable pupils to fill any gaps in their skills and knowledge and then build on what they can already do. As a result of this, pupils normally make good progress in lessons. However, there are occasions when assessment within lessons is not as thorough. Some pupils are not moved on to more challenging tasks quickly enough for example problem solving in mathematics that requires them to use their reasoning skills.
- During the inspection, teachers successfully demonstrated high quality descriptive writing and showed pupils how to set out mathematical problems. This enabled pupils to produce their own writing that made use of language techniques such as varying sentence length and providing different viewpoints. It also meant they could use a table to look for a pattern in results during a mathematics investigation.
- Pupils are given opportunities to apply their literacy and mathematical skills in tasks that have a real-life context. For example, during the inspection, some lower junior pupils were asked to write to a political party about an issue of importance, showing an understanding of democracy. Older children had applied their mathematical skills to produce a line graph demonstrating the results of a science experiment about chocolate linked to recent topic work.
- Teachers use marking and feedback well to help pupils to improve their work. Pupils respond to this feedback by correcting their work in a different coloured pen to show that they have made any improvements required. However, teachers do not take a consistent approach to teaching or correcting common spellings. As a result, even the most able writers make mistakes with the spelling of simple words

that are at times uncorrected.

- The dedicated team of teaching assistants now works well with groups of pupils with different abilities, both in the classroom and in smaller groups outside the class. In a successful Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher and the teaching assistant shared information about the progress of different groups of children throughout the lesson. This ensured that all pupils were being challenged or supported as required. In other lessons, some teaching assistants were less confident to step in when pupils were floundering, to adapt tasks where necessary or to ensure that teachers were informed about how well their pupils had done.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has improved overall since the previous inspection so that standards are now average in writing and mathematics and above average in reading. The school's data and pupils' workbooks show that current Year 2 pupils are making even more rapid progress and attainment is continuing to rise.
- The proportions of pupils making the expected progress through Key Stage 2 have improved and are now in line with national averages for writing and mathematics and above average in reading. The proportions of pupils making more than expected progress have also improved in reading and mathematics and are now broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result of this stronger progress, more pupils have attained the higher Level 5 at the end of Key Stage 2 in the last two years.
- Current pupils in Key Stage 2 are now making faster progress than previously. Year 6 pupils have already made more progress than their predecessors due to the improvements in teaching.
- The most-able pupils make more rapid progress than their peers nationally. The proportion of pupils reaching the very highest standards in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 is consistently above that found nationally.
- The previous progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils is not reported as the numbers are low.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now making more rapid progress than in previous years, which is helping to close the gap in attainment.
- Good support from individual needs assistants and suitable provision for their needs ensures that disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making similar good progress to other pupils in the school.
- Gaps in attainments between girls and boys in Key Stages 1 and 2 in 2013 were successfully dealt with so that the gaps were narrowed or closed in 2014.
- Reading has a high priority within the school. Initiatives such as the weekly 'stop and read' sessions have contributed to sustaining improvement and are ensuring that achievement in this area of learning continues to rise.
- Performance in the Year 1 phonics screening check was below the national average in both 2013 and 2014. The success rate in Year 2 for those retaking the check is also below national figures. Variable teaching in this area has led to a legacy of weaker spelling skills throughout the school.

The early years provision is good

- Children start school in Reception with skills and knowledge that are broadly typical for their age. From these starting points, children make good progress so that the proportion achieving a good level of development is above the national average.
- Teaching is good. Children are taught the key skills needed for them to be successful in the next stage of their learning and make a successful transition to Year 1.
- Parents speak positively about how well children settle into school life and continue to be involved in their child's learning through the use of 'wow vouchers'.
- The learning environment both inside and outside the classroom promotes the different areas of learning well. Interesting activities encourage both boys and girls to think and explore for themselves.
- Children display the characteristics of effective learning and are confident to talk to visitors about their learning, for example when showing them the eggs they are waiting to hatch.
- Behaviour is good; children know how to stay safe while learning, taking calculated risks, for example when piling the bricks very high with the human crane.
- Children work well together. For example, a boy and girl were teaching each other how to write each other's names correctly on a whiteboard, using their early phonic skills. However, not all children are

always fully involved in learning during whole-class phonics teaching. This slows the progress of some children in this important area.

- Mathematical skills were taught very successfully to a small group of children who were able to carry out subtraction problems with numbers to 20, using the thoughtful practical resources and visual methods provided by the teacher.
- The class teacher provides detailed plans for teaching assistants to use to help guide children's learning. However, the assistants do not always contribute fully to assessments through their observation notes.
- The leadership of the early years provision is good and ensures there are close links with the onsite nursery so that children have a smooth start to school life.

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

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| Unique reference number | 130954 |
| Local authority | East Sussex |
| Inspection number | 462448 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 5–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 193 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Wolfgang Weis |
| Headteacher | Louisa Michie |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4–5 June 2013 |
| Telephone number | 01825 764244 |
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