

Harrowgate Hill Primary School

Thompson Street West, Darlington, County Durham, DL3 0HZ

Inspection dates 24–25 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- This school is stimulating, challenging, happy, friendly and purposeful. Its aims are fulfilled.
- The school is well led. The headteacher's passion and drive for the pupils to succeed is shared by all staff and governors.
- Most pupils make good progress from their starting points. Progress is very rapid in Year 6.
- Children in the early years make a good start to their learning, because teaching prioritises the development of their language and communication skills.
- Teaching is good. Teachers know their pupils well. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and provide clear and constructive feedback to help pupils improve.
- Pupils in the early years and Year 1 make outstanding progress in their acquisition of phonics (the sounds that letters represent) knowledge.
- Standards in reading are strong throughout the school.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, as they move around the school and in the playground. Pupils are polite, helpful and respectful to each other and to adults.
- The school's systems to keep pupils safe are extremely rigorous. Pupils and parents agree that the school is a very safe learning environment.
- The highly skilled governors know the school well. They are knowledgeable about the progress that pupils make throughout the school and hold senior leaders to account most rigorously.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most able pupils, particularly in mathematics, are not always given work that challenges them to reach their full potential.
- The progress that pupils make throughout the school is not always as rapid as that made in Year 6, because pupils do not always know exactly what they are learning and how to judge their success.
- Some gaps remain between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils, both in the school and nationally.
- In the early years, children's imagination and creativity are not always well-developed.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors visited 38 part-lessons, two of which were observed jointly with senior leaders, on the first day of the inspection. The inspectors visited a range of lessons for short periods, including groups that support the development of pupils’ reading and phonic skills.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and five governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body. The lead inspector also met with a representative from Darlington local authority and spoke by telephone with the school’s improvement advisor.
- The inspectors spoke informally to pupils in lessons and at various times during each day. The inspectors also spoke formally to three groups of pupils on the second day of the inspection.
- Questionnaire returns completed by 24 members of staff were taken into consideration.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of pupils’ workbooks and information about pupils’ current progress in lessons. Inspectors also reviewed a number of documents, including the school’s development plan, attendance records, information relating to the work the school does to keep pupils safe and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Account was taken of the 71 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school’s own recent parental survey. Inspectors also spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day.
- A number of events to support the transition of pupils between stages of education took place during the inspection. The Year 6 pupils attended their secondary schools during both days. The remaining pupils transferred to their new classes, with their new class teachers, on the second day of the inspection. An induction session for children new to the Nursery class took place on the second day of the inspection.

Inspection team

Belita Scott, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Timothy Nelson

Additional Inspector

Melanie Maitland

Additional Inspector

Carl Faulkner

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or pupils who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for support through the pupil premium funding, is broadly average, but is increasing year on year. Pupil premium funding is additional government funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and for children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- Children in the early years attend full-time provision in the Reception classes and part-time provision in the Nursery classes.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has achieved the Quality Mark for Early Years, Extended Services, Basic Skills, Science and for the Induction of Newly Qualified Teachers.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching further so that a larger proportion is outstanding, enabling all pupils, especially the most able, to reach their full potential, by:
 - ensuring all pupils know what they are learning in every lesson and are able to judge how successful they have been
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use their skills and abilities to carry out mathematical investigations and problem-solving activities
 - ensuring activities are more effective in helping the youngest children to develop their imagination and creativity
 - finely tune the provision for disadvantaged pupils so that they attain standards that are in line with their classmates in school and other pupils nationally.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher is passionate about the school and its place in the local community. She has high expectations of herself and the staff together with high aspirations for the pupils. The headteacher is ably supported by a very proactive deputy headteacher who leads both English and mathematics throughout the school.
 - Through meticulous and embedded systems, the leadership of teaching in this very large primary school is strong. The four assistant headteachers manage the learning in the early years, Key Stage 1, lower Key Stage 2 and upper Key Stage 2 most ably. The governing body holds the assistant headteachers to account for pupil progress during termly challenge meetings.
 - Leaders, on a termly basis, collect data and formally check the progress that each individual child makes. They promote equality of opportunity and tackle discrimination well.
 - Senior leaders check the work of the school diligently and provide feedback on areas for development. For example, the level of challenge for the most able pupils in mathematics was found wanting in a recent scrutiny of pupils' work.
 - The development of staff is a strength of the school. Teachers, new to the classroom, have weekly opportunities to observe more experienced teachers, to team teach with experienced teachers and to take part in peer coaching. Their skills develop rapidly during their first year in the profession.
 - Middle leaders champion the foundation subjects well. They monitor how well the curriculum is covered and identify accurately areas for further development.
 - Pupil premium funding is used wisely and is targeted specifically to improve the progress made by disadvantaged pupils. The school's most recent assessment data indicate that, although gaps remain between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and their peers in school and nationally, they are beginning to narrow.
 - Additional primary school sport funding is used well to increase participation rates in extra-curricular activities and, through the use of sports coaches, to increase the skills of both the pupils and the staff.
 - The school makes sure that all pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their education through an emphasis on the acquisition of basic skills. Very effective transition arrangements were seen by inspectors during the inspection. The headteacher prepared the pupils for the challenges of a new start, in a new year group, during collective worship on day 1. On day 2, pupils, although sad to leave their current teachers, eagerly met and worked with their new ones.
 - The curriculum prioritises the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. The school works hard to ensure pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils in Year 5 explained fully how pupil candidates encourage their peers to vote for them in the school council elections.
 - Many pupils attend the varied range of extra-curricular clubs. These include sports, music and faith activities.
 - Statutory responsibilities to safeguard and protect the pupils meet requirements. All staff and governors have undertaken training that is relevant to their roles and responsibilities. Policies are reviewed regularly. There are highly developed systems to ensure that appropriate checks are made on all adults who have access to the school site.
 - The local authority rightly adopts a very light touch to supporting and challenging the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
- Governance is strong at Harrowgate Hill. Governors share the headteacher's high aspirations for the pupils and staff in the school. Governors' skills are used exceptionally well to challenge and support the school, for example, through spot checks on the school's single central record. Governors interrogate pupil progress data on a termly basis and have a thorough understanding of the progress made by different groups of pupils in different classes and year groups. Governors fully understand the links between teachers' pay and performance. Governors take robust action to tackle underperformance. They ensure that all child protection and safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Harrowgate Hill's governing body supports other governing bodies throughout the Darlington local authority.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons. They enjoy learning and are eager to please their teachers. However, not all pupils exhibit a real thirst for learning. For example, a pupil told the inspectors that pupils do not have to answer questions in lessons and are only asked questions if they put their hands up.
- Behaviour is well managed in this very large primary school. Pupils play an active part in this management. For example, pupils monitor behaviour in the corridors on the way to and from the school hall.
- Pupils are polite, respectful and courteous to other pupils, staff and visitors to the school. The school encourages a sense of community, which was exemplified during the inspection when a Year 5 child told inspectors that pupils in school 'stick together like a family.'

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils know about the risks to which they may be exposed. They are particularly knowledgeable about e-safety through information learnt during e-safety days and by the e-safety work they complete at the beginning of every unit of work in computing.
- Pupils have a sound awareness of the different forms that bullying can take. Pupils are confident that adults in school act appropriately and quickly to address bullying incidents.
- Prejudiced-based name-calling, such as that connected to sexual orientation, does not happen on the school site. Some name-calling recently occurred at an off-site extra-curricular club and was dealt with immediately at the venue. In accordance with the school's meticulous systems, full details were reported back to senior leaders in school and recorded in the school's logs.
- Pupils feel particularly safe during lunch breaks because of the work of the lunchtime supervisors. Pupils appreciate having a dedicated lunchtime supervisor for each class, a supervisor who knows each individual child very well.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly average. The proportion of pupils who are persistently absent has reduced significantly during the current academic year because of the conscientious work of the school's administration team.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching across the school is good overall, with some that is outstanding. As a result, pupils make good and occasionally outstanding progress from their starting points. Pupils make more rapid progress in Year 6 because of high quality teaching, a high adult-to-pupil ratio in English and mathematics lessons and the daily extra sessions that are provided for them before and after school.
- Pupils are conscientious and try their best. Pupils make the most rapid progress when the teacher has made it crystal clear what pupils are learning and how pupils will know if they have been successful. For example, pupils in a Year 2 mathematics lesson were introduced to right-angled turns and, by the end of the lesson, could measure their success through the identification of the number of quarter turns made and whether the direction of turn was clockwise or anti-clockwise.
- The teaching of phonics skills in the early years and Key Stage 1 is exceptionally strong. An extremely high proportion of pupils achieves and exceeds the standard in the Year 1 phonics check. This is a strength of the school.
- Reading is taught well. Pupils have access to high quality books that are renewed regularly. Pupils at an early stage of reading use their skills in phonics well to read previously unknown words. Pupils read books that are just at the right level of difficulty to be challenging, but accessible. Pupils in Key Stage 2 read regularly and for pleasure. Standards in reading are higher than in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics and make good progress. Sometimes the work is not sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils. Pupils do not get enough opportunities to develop their mathematical skills in problem-solving and investigating. Pupils told the inspectors that they would like to see some of their calculations and problem-solving work displayed in their classrooms.
- The development of writing is given high priority in school. Pupils like to see their written work displayed in their classrooms and around the school. They said it 'gives them a buzz' and everyone can see how neat their work has become. Teachers are determined to improve the pupils' basic skills in grammar,

spelling and punctuation. Teachers give verbal feedback to pupils throughout lessons. Pupils also get written feedback from their teachers for all work completed in English and mathematics. There is an expectation that time is allocated for pupils to respond to teachers' written comments. Pupils enjoy this activity; they enjoy improving their work.

- Teachers question pupils throughout lessons. The standard of the questioning is not consistent throughout the school. In some classes teachers accept one word answers; in other classes teachers expect fully explained and reasoned answers.

The achievement of pupils is good

- The school's achievement data and pupils' current work confirm that pupils, from their different starting points, make good progress.
- The proportion of children in the early years reaching a good level of development was broadly average in 2014. A larger proportion of children reached a good level of development in 2015.
- Over time, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's own data shows that standards this year are very similar to last year; they are broadly average.
- Again, over time, pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 reach broadly average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's own data and evidence in the workbooks of the Year 6 pupils indicate that standards will rise this year in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in reading is particularly strong.
- Pupils entitled to support through the pupil premium funding make good progress from their individual starting points. However, at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014, this group of pupils was behind their other classmates by four terms in reading, three terms in writing and four terms in mathematics. They were behind other pupils nationally by four terms in reading, three terms in writing and three terms in mathematics. The school has taken effective action to close these gaps. The school's data indicate that disadvantaged pupils are currently one term behind their peers in school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The attainment and progress of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is good. The headteacher, who is the coordinator for special educational needs, ensures that teaching is matched well to the pupils' individual needs.
- The most able pupils (those who achieved Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2011) have made good progress in writing and outstanding progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2. Too few pupils achieved the higher level in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 to comment upon the progress made.

The early years provision is good

- The leadership and management of the early years are good.
- Children enter nursery with skills and abilities that are below those typical for their age. A small proportion enters with skills and abilities that are significantly below those typical for their age, especially in their communication and language skills. Children make good progress from their starting points, because of sharply focussed work completed in their key worker groups. For example, a child who could mark-make to form circles on entry to nursery in January could write her first name, with a capital letter, neatly and legibly by June.
- Children also make good progress in the Reception classes. They make outstanding progress in their acquisition of phonic skills, but the development of writing skills is slower. Most of the children leave the Reception classes ready for the demands of the curriculum in Year 1.
- The school tracks the progress and attainment of children in the early years well. Staff use data about different vulnerable groups to plan activities to close identified gaps.
- Teachers know the children well. They provide activities to ensure children make good progress. However, children's imagination and creativity are not always well developed. Sometimes, activities are overly structured and controlled. For example, during the inspection, all of the paints were ready mixed (none required colour mixing) and adults removed completed paintings and put out new paper.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the provision in the early years. They find the staff are approachable and welcoming. Parents find it easy to ask staff questions and to work in partnership with the school. Parents appreciate the information that school provides about their child's progress. They also appreciate the advice and guidance provided about helping their child to learn to read and write. When

asked about their view on the provision in the early years, a parent commented, 'love it!'

- Leaders and managers have high expectations of the children and of their parents. Leaders are meticulous in following up any absences in Nursery. They are determined that all children get into the good habit of attending school every day.
- Children behave well in both Nursery and Reception. New children settle quickly into the routines of school life. The school's meticulous systems ensure that all welfare requirements are met. The early years environment is very safe. The children wear coloured vests in the early years so it is very easy to establish that all of the children are present and working in the right area of the very busy environment.

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	135088
Local authority	Darlington
Inspection number	449680

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	661
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Maddison
Headteacher	Carole Hancocks
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2010
Telephone number	01325 253300
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