

Harpur Hill Primary School

Trent Avenue, Harpur Hill, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 9LP

Inspection dates

28–29 September 2016

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Significant changes in leadership and staffing slowed improvement following the last inspection. New leaders, particularly middle leaders, have not had sufficient time to drive through all of the changes needed.
- Over time, teaching has not built carefully on pupils' existing knowledge and skills. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their understanding which slow their progress.
- The quality of teaching, although improving, is variable across classes and is not yet consistently good. Some teachers do not plan activities that challenge pupils of all abilities to think deeply enough and to solve problems, especially in mathematics. Occasionally, learning slows as pupils complete mundane activities or wait for the teacher's attention.
- Pupils, particularly those of lower ability, do not make good use of the feedback that teachers give them to improve their work.
- Although progress is improving, this is not fast enough to enable some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged, to reach the standards expected for their age.
- Changes to the way that the school collects its assessment information have hampered its ability to effectively analyse the progress of groups and so plan for further improvement.
- The governing body has not sufficiently challenged leaders about the effective use of the pupil premium.

The school has the following strengths

- Recent changes, driven by the highly effective leadership of the new headteacher, are turning the school around quickly. Leaders have the confidence and trust of staff, pupils and parents.
- Pupils' personal development is strong. Pupils thrive in a safe and caring school community which is well regarded by parents.
- The provision for children in the early years has improved significantly since the previous inspection. As a result, children make good progress and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils now make better progress in reading in most classes as a result of well-planned improvements by leaders.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by making sure that:
 - learning time is not lost within lessons
 - older pupils are able to move more quickly to mathematical activities which enable them to give explanations, justify their answers and help them solve problems
 - pupils, particularly those of lower ability, regularly use teachers' feedback to help them improve their work
 - disadvantaged pupils make swifter progress so that they all reach the standards they should for their age and starting points.
- Strengthen leadership and management, by:
 - embedding the roles of new and existing middle leaders so that they have a greater influence on improving teaching, and so the responsibility for improvement is shared evenly across the school
 - using assessment information more effectively so that extra support can be given quickly to those pupils who need it and so that school improvement planning has clear milestones for success.

An external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Harpur Hill continues to require improvement as, despite the rapid progress since the appointment of the headteacher in January 2016, the school is not yet good. The improvement journey got off to a slow start following the last inspection. There have been changes in staffing and these have hindered the pace of improvement.
- The new headteacher, supported by key leaders, has accomplished much in a short space of time. She has very high aspirations for the school and its pupils. As a result of her leadership and the commitment of staff and governors, teaching is improving and achievement is rising steadily across the school.
- The headteacher, other leaders, and governors visit classrooms frequently to check on teaching and look at books. The feedback that teachers and teaching assistants receive is specific and is helping them to understand what they need to do to improve further. Those teachers who spoke to inspectors expressed a keenness to learn and develop their teaching skills.
- Due to changes in the way that the school gathers and records assessment information, it is only now in a position to use it effectively to identify which groups of pupils across the school need support and how it will know whether this support has been successful in the longer term.
- More effective systems to manage teachers' performance are now in place to raise expectations and ensure that staff have the skills to teach well. Leaders have identified training opportunities for individuals and for the whole staff, such as recent work on improving pupils' understanding of what they read. Leaders have sought and received quality advice and support from the local authority and from their teaching school alliance.
- Middle leaders are building their skills and confidence and are beginning to contribute to improving the quality of teaching, such as in the early years. However, there is much still to be done and too much responsibility for bringing about improvement has rested with the headteacher.
- The good-quality support for pupils' well-being has been maintained since the previous inspection. There is a range of strategies to help pupils overcome some of the challenges that can hinder learning. The family support worker knows the families and the children very well. She works tirelessly to support them and ensure that they are in school and enjoying their learning. As a result of the school's actions, attendance has improved for all groups and is now broadly average.
- Before the headteacher's arrival, the use of the pupil premium had a variable impact. Not enough of the funding was spent on supporting the learning of younger pupils. Working with an experienced governor, she has improved the extra provision available to all pupils. Some disadvantaged pupils are now making faster progress. However, there is still a way to go in ensuring that they reach the same standards as others nationally.
- Sports premium funding is used effectively to promote pupils' enjoyment of, and participation in, physical activity. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and they value the range of sporting opportunities that are offered. The school's successful involvement in

competitive sports is now being balanced with activities such as archery, fencing and cheerleading. Younger pupils are also being offered a wider range of clubs to ensure they, too, are fit and active.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is promoted well through a broad and rich curriculum which is well represented in their books and in the displays around school. The curriculum has been planned well to ensure that there are opportunities to link reading, writing and mathematics skills with those of other subjects such as science and history.
- Leaders challenge stereotypes and help pupils to understand a wide range of cultures and lives, for instance through the heritage week that took place last year. The curriculum is further enriched through a range of visits such as to see the Hallé orchestra and the Buxton Opera. Recent visitors to school include a local councillor, a poet and an artist.
- The school is committed to ensuring that pupils develop a good understanding of fundamental British values. Pupils are aware of the importance of democracy and equality of opportunity because these have been well taught. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 organised a mock referendum in the summer term and visited a polling station to see democratic values in action.
- The local authority and the Dove Valley Teaching Alliance have both provided useful support to the school's leaders and governors to improve the quality of teaching and of leadership.

Governance of the school

- Governors recognise that they did not hold leaders sufficiently to account in the past and are now much more aware of their roles and responsibilities. They have sought training to help them develop greater understanding of effective governance, including the use of assessment information and management of teachers' performance. They are clearer about what to ask about teaching and pupils' achievement and are better able to understand the answers that leaders provide.
- Governors now regularly visit the school to meet with staff and to conduct learning walks with the headteacher and other leaders. They recognise that they need to be more closely involved with the leaders responsible for the use of the pupil premium and for special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they have a greater awareness of how funding is used and its impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Governors have surveyed parents' views of the school and have then worked with the headteacher on improvements. Parents said they wanted more information on how well their child was progressing and how they could help at home. A mid-year report has been introduced alongside information sessions on a range of topics. Parents have welcomed these.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Pupils' safety is paramount to all staff and governors. Staff have the knowledge to spot early warnings of child abuse and they know what to do to act on their concerns. School records show that any worries are followed through thoroughly. There are very effective links to external services to support vulnerable pupils and their families.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Although improving, teaching is not yet consistently good across year groups and classes. Pupils make slower progress when lessons are slow to get off the ground or when they sit with their hands up waiting to get the teacher's attention. At times, activities fail to build on what pupils can already do or they last too long and pupils' attention wanders.
- In some mathematics lessons, although teachers plan tasks for different groups of pupils they are not checking pupils' understanding frequently enough. As a result, older pupils often complete lots of questions of the same type before moving on to slightly more difficult, but similar, questions. This means that they do not get enough opportunity or time to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills and so deepen their mathematical understanding. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that mathematics lessons were less challenging than those in English.
- Where teaching is stronger, there is a productive 'buzz' around the room: pupils are independent learners, knowing what to do if they are stuck; and they relish the challenges they are given. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, planning well-structured tasks which enable all to make rapid progress. Questioning is used effectively to find out what pupils already know and so provide increased challenge. In a lesson on Roman numerals, pupils were encouraged to check their own and their classmates' progress. As a result, they were motivated to learn more.
- Reading is increasingly well taught as teachers have benefited from appropriate training. As a result of the increased attention to developing pupils' comprehension skills, more pupils are reaching the higher levels by the end of each key stage.
- Pupils are making good use of the writing checklists provided by teachers. They say that these help them know what they need to learn next. Pupils' presentation of their work has improved as a result of teachers' higher expectations and the consistent teaching of handwriting. Occasionally, teachers do not correct basic errors in pupils' spelling or punctuation and so pupils do not learn from their mistakes.
- Teachers are following the school's marking and feedback policy introduced since the last inspection and are giving pupils advice on how to improve their work. However, some pupils, particularly those of lower ability, are not acting upon this advice. In contrast, the most able pupils are regularly responding to and benefiting from these comments.
- The teaching of the most able pupils has improved since the previous inspection in many classes. Books show that many teachers are providing them with activities that challenge their abilities. However, this practice is still inconsistent across the whole school.
- Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to match work to the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They work effectively with small groups or individuals in class, enabling them to access the same curriculum as their classmates.
- Regular homework is set for all pupils. A few parents spoken to during the inspection said that they would appreciate more information on expectations for older pupils.
- Parents now receive more information about how well their child is progressing and how they can help them. Although older pupils say that they read at home, very few of

them say they do so with an adult. During the inspection, parents of Year 1 children had their first 'reading together' session in school, with many taking the opportunity to stay and read with their child.

- Productive, warm relationships characterise lessons and make a good contribution to pupils' improving progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Older pupils take on additional responsibilities such as house captains and prefects and act as good role models for younger children in the school. Year 6 pupils support the youngest children at lunchtime, helping them with their meals and chatting to them. Pupils are keen to be recognised by the kindness award.
- Pupils display positive attitudes towards their learning. They relish their 'mild', 'spicy' and 'hot' challenges in lessons and most display resilience and perseverance when faced with these. This is because teachers have created an ethos that builds confidence and self-esteem.
- Respect and tolerance of others are strengths of the school. During lessons, pupils collaborate well, discussing their learning with one another and sharing ideas to solve problems or improve their writing. Pupils have been well supported through a recent bereavement at the school and know that it is 'better to talk about it than bottle it up'.
- Leaders have been successful in ensuring that pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying. Although they say that it does not happen often, pupils are confident that it will be dealt with promptly and effectively by staff. They are taught about prejudiced types of behaviour and say that this is not an issue at their school. One pupil said, 'everyone should be treated the same'. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. They say they feel safe and their parents agree.
- Although pupils understand the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and diet, not all relate this to the snacks that they bring to school. The school council has plans to write to all parents to seek their support with this.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are well mannered and friendly to each other and visitors. During lunchtimes and breaktimes, they play well alongside and with each other, ensuring that nobody is left out of games or activities. Adults ensure that pupils are well supervised and that their play is safe.
- During lessons, pupils listen to their teachers and respond to instructions quickly and without fuss. Their positive attitudes towards their learning are making a good contribution towards the increased rates of progress seen in the school.
- Attendance has improved as a result of the concerted actions of the school. In particular, disadvantaged pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are in school more regularly than was the case in the past.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' outcomes require improvement. Their progress over time has been variable as a result of the quality of teaching and teachers' expectations. The school's own assessment records show that progress for current pupils has accelerated over the past year although it is not yet consistently strong across the school. However, although they are catching up, too few older pupils are making better than expected progress from their different starting points.
- Rates of progress are improving because there is greater consistency in the quality of teaching, particularly in reading. This is confirmed by inspection evidence.
- Some pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged or are of lower ability, are still not making the progress they should from their starting points. Staff are now fully aware of these pupils' needs and how they can be supported in class. The new leader has evaluated the effectiveness of additional support to ensure that pupil premium funding is used to greater effect.
- Higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of the Reception Year reflect the improvements in teaching and learning in this area of the school and provide a firm foundation for pupils as they move into Year 1.
- Early reading skills are generally fostered well, although the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the national phonics check was below that found nationally in 2016 and 2015. The school is now using the same teaching programme across the Reception and key stage 1 classes and pupils' outcomes are improving. Pupils of all ages who read with inspectors were generally fluent and understood what they were reading. Occasionally, pupils choose books which are too hard or too easy for them.
- At the end of key stages 1 and 2, the proportions of pupils reaching the expectations for their age are similar to the national averages. At both points, the proportions of pupils working at the higher levels in reading are above the national picture. Particular improvement from 2015 can also be seen in the key stage 1 mathematics outcomes.
- Improvements in the teaching of grammar, punctuation and spelling have led to higher results in national assessments. Pupils' writing is now more technically accurate although some pupils have considerable gaps in this area. The school's strategy of one book for all written work helps pupils to see the importance of applying these skills in all areas of the curriculum. The new handwriting scheme and expectations are also having a positive impact on presentation in pupils' workbooks.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making better progress than previously. Precise identification of their needs means that the quality support they receive from adults is more targeted and effective.
- Along with everyone else, the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are also achieving better. Across key stages 1 and 2, these pupils are building on their stronger starting points. Some are excelling in their reading skills.

Early years provision

Good

- Most children enter the school with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. Good teaching ensures that children get off to a flying start.
- Staff assess children's skills accurately when they arrive at the school and then provide them with a rich range of opportunities which promote their personal development and early literacy and numeracy skills, including phonics. Adults model vocabulary effectively at every available opportunity. For example, when eating carrots at snack time, children are encouraged to describe and compare them.
- All areas of learning are developed effectively both in the classroom and in the outdoor area. Staff know when to intervene and when to stand back. As a result, children make good progress so that by the end of the year a higher than average proportion reach a good level of development and are ready for the challenges of Year 1.
- The leadership and management of the early years are good. The leader has an accurate view of the strengths and areas for development of the provision, and has ensured that issues from the last inspection have been addressed. She has good plans to improve the provision further, for example with regard to developing children's speaking skills, and is well supported by other senior leaders.
- The pupil premium funding is being used well to provide additional opportunities to address children's needs, such as extra reading.
- There are very positive relationships and communication with parents and staff work with them closely to ensure a smooth transition into the school. One parent said, 'My child is happy going to school, loves her teacher and is excited about learning.'
- Children's behaviour and safety are good. Adults show great care and concern for children's well-being and they respond very well to this. Leaders have established a warm and nurturing environment in which children feel safe and happy.

School details

Unique reference number	112523
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10019541

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	351
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Rushworth
Headteacher	Victoria Giliker
Telephone number	01298 23261
Website	www.harpurhill.derbyshire.sch.uk
Email address	info@harpurhill.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 September 2014

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Since the last inspection there have been considerable changes in staffing. The headteacher joined the school in January 2016.
- The school has received support from the Ashbourne Dove Valley Teaching School Alliance.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed learning throughout the school. They saw 22 lessons, or parts of lessons. Five of these were jointly observed with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with pupils, six members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, a consultant from the teaching school alliance, the headteacher and other staff with leadership responsibilities.
- Inspectors took account of the 68 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the comments made. An inspector also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school. Pupils' views were sought by talking to them both formally and informally during the school day.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, observed break and lunchtime, and carried out learning walks.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documents, including: the school's own checks on its performance; the school's information about pupils' learning and progress; planning and monitoring documents; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Joanne Sanchez-Thompson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Boyd	Ofsted Inspector
Kate Nash	Ofsted Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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