

Harmans Water Primary School

Wellington Drive, Harmans Water, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 9NE

Inspection dates

4–5 July 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. Expectations of what pupils can do are not consistently high enough.
- Key stage 2 pupils' progress is too variable in all subjects, including English and mathematics.
- The standard of key stage 2 pupils' spelling is not good.
- Inconsistent teaching over a sustained period means that older pupils do not have the mathematical knowledge they should have.
- Almost all pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check. However, reading materials for the lowest-attaining readers are not well matched to their levels of phonic understanding.
- Leaders, governors and the local authority feel that the time taken in responding to external pressures to change the school governance has hampered school improvement. Too much of school leaders' time has been taken away from the job of improving the school.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher is highly respected by staff, parents and carers, governors and the local authority. Her ambition, commitment and decisive actions are improving the school.
- Leaders have had a significant positive impact on many areas of school life. Pupils' behaviour is now good. Harmans Water is now a calm and purposeful place to learn.
- The provision to support pupils' personal development is exemplary. Pupils, including the most vulnerable, are happy and safe.
- Leaders at all levels have made significant improvements to the curriculum. They have ensured that all subjects are taught and that teachers are clear about what they teach.
- Staff morale is high and, for the first time in many years, staffing at all levels is stable. Staff feel valued and respected, including non-teaching staff.
- Leaders have improved the early years. Children make good progress and are well prepared to start Year 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - key stage 2 pupils' spelling is more accurate, particularly of common words that they write frequently
 - older pupils have the basic mathematical concepts they need to be fluent in their mathematical thinking
 - new curriculum plans are fully implemented to ensure that older pupils have the knowledge they should have in subjects such as art, science and geography
 - all teachers raise their expectations by using assessment information better to ensure that planned learning builds on what pupils know and can do
 - key stage 1 reading books, including those that go home, are more closely matched to pupils' phonic ability
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that all leaders' time and energy are focused on school improvement.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher leads the school with great passion and integrity. Staff at all levels are fully behind her commitment to school improvement, because it puts pupils' needs at the heart of all of their work. Morale is high, and staffing is the most stable it has been for many years. The headteacher has developed wider leadership in the school. Consequently, leaders at all levels are contributing to school improvement.
- Leaders have significantly improved pupils' behaviour. Staff recognise and value the consistency and stability that leaders bring to behaviour management.
- Leaders at all levels have taken swift and decisive action to improve the curriculum. Over time, through successive interim leadership arrangements, the curriculum had become narrow and disjointed. High turnover in leadership and staffing meant that little thought was given to what pupils were learning in subjects other than English and mathematics. Sports and the arts were neglected. The current curriculum is clear, coherent and well planned. Teachers are now clear about the subject knowledge and skills that will be taught in each year group, and in each subject. However, a poor curriculum and too much inconsistent teaching over time for older pupils mean that key stage 2 pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding.
- The extra-curricular provision is strong. Parents are pleased that they were actively involved in identifying many of the experiences that pupils now access. Pupils talk with excitement about theatre trips and upcoming sleepovers in museums. Pupils' social and moral development is very good. Leaders and staff ensure that the school's values are more than a set of words on display. Pupils understand values such as 'respect', 'thoughtfulness' and 'teamwork'. A consistent focus on values has contributed to the significant improvement in pupils' behaviour.
- Parents are overwhelming positive about the school, despite its turbulent last few years. Many recognise the change in culture and ethos that the headteacher has brought to the school. Parents are positive about improvements in behaviour and the curriculum. Some parents, including those with more than one pupil in the school, still feel there is inconsistency between different year groups.
- Additional funding that the school receives is now used well. Sports funding has led to a significant increase in pupils' sports participation and their engagement in competitive sport. The trophy cabinet is full and expanding. Pupil premium funding is used effectively. Leaders responded swiftly to the findings of the pupil premium review after the last inspection. In 2017, there was a significant improvement in the progress that disadvantaged pupils made from key stage 1 to key stage 2 in reading and mathematics.
- Funding to support pupils who have special education needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is used increasingly effectively. Leaders are very clear about the positive impact their actions are having on pupils' personal development and behaviours. They are currently revising assessment processes for pupils who are working significantly below age-related expectations, in order to better evaluate their academic progress.
- Leaders' evaluation of the school's performance is wholly accurate. They have unerring clarity about the quality of teaching and the progress that pupils are making in their

learning this year. Leaders know where teaching is effective and where it is less so. However, weaknesses in the accuracy of teachers' assessments over time have not made evaluating pupils' progress from their starting points easy. Leaders, rightly, question the validity of some of the data they are working with.

- Leaders have been distracted from their core business of school improvement. They have had to spend too much time exploring alternative methods of school governance and funding. Requests for the headteacher's time and availability have not always been reasonable. This has created pressure and distraction that has not helped school improvement.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. The governing body is equally adept at supporting and challenging leaders. Governors know exactly where the quality of education the school provided was, where it is now, and where they want to take it next. Governors are ambitious for the school and pupils. Governors have high regard for the headteacher, and understand and fulfil their role with regard to managing her well-being. They are also not afraid to ask highly pertinent questions about the focus and pace of improvement. Governors' monitoring visits have a clear purpose. They ensure that governors can fully explore what leaders are telling them or reporting to them.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders have recruited and trained a highly effective team to ensure that pupils are happy, safe and thriving. Staff are well trained to watch and listen to pupils very carefully. As a result, any concerns about a pupil's well-being or something a pupil may say are recorded in a timely manner. Concerns are very well managed by the leaders with a delegated responsibility for safeguarding. They make informed decisions about when they need to work with other professionals to protect pupils from harm. Record-keeping is exemplary. The systems, process and culture that leaders have created put safeguarding at the heart of the school's work.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is improving but is too variable to be good.
- Some teachers use assessment information well. They ensure that planned learning meets the needs of pupils. Others do not. Work then can be too easy or too difficult for pupils.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving. Some staff are now well trained to develop pupils' problem-solving and reasoning skills. However, this is not consistent.
- There is variability in the way that staff recognise and help pupils overcome misconceptions. Where this is not done consistently well, pupils repeat errors and this hampers progress.
- There is not a consistent or effective approach to improving older pupils' spelling. Leaders know this. They have already adopted a different approach to the teaching of

spelling for September.

- Teaching assistants are well trained. They feel valued and respected by the current leadership team. Other adults have a positive impact on pupils' learning.
- The teaching of phonics is strong. All adults are well trained in the school's chosen systematic way to teach pupils about the letters and the sounds they make. However, there is inconsistency in how pupils use and apply their phonic knowledge in their early reading. Too many books that early readers use at school and take home do not align with their phonic knowledge.
- Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and respectful. Leaders, staff and pupils' actions and interactions embody the values of the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Leaders have created a warm, safe and happy school. Teams of adults are well trained and supported to promote the emotional well-being of pupils. The range of provision to support the most vulnerable pupils is exceptional.
- Pupils who have not always found it easy to manage their feelings, emotions and self-control are exceptionally well nurtured. They flourish at school and are now ready to learn, make friends and enjoy school.
- Pupils talk with pride about their school. Pupils can talk about how their behaviour has improved, how the headteacher has enabled them to play brass instruments and about the exciting trips they have been on, or are going on.
- Pupils feel safe at school. Several told inspectors they wanted to stay at school all day. They have a good understanding of personal safety, including how to stay safe online. Pupils are confident that adults deal with the rare occurrences of unkindness. Rare incidents of racist language are instantly recorded and swiftly dealt with.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Harmans Water has transformed into a calm and purposeful place to learn. Outstanding personal development has led to significant improvements in pupils' behaviour, particularly of the most vulnerable pupils. The number of fixed-term exclusions and significant behavioural incidents has declined sharply over time.
- Pupils are well behaved in classrooms. When teaching and learning are not well matched to their needs, they become uninterested, but they do not misbehave.
- Playgrounds are a hive of activity. Happy pupils play nicely together. Pupils say that the range of things to play with and to do has made break and lunchtimes better.
- More pupils are coming to school regularly, including those who are disadvantaged. However, leaders recognise there is more to do to reduce the numbers of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities who are persistently absent.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Current pupils, particularly older ones, have made inconsistent progress over time in all subjects. Some year groups have had multiple teachers in a year on their journey through the school.
- Standards are rising in English and mathematics at the end of key stage 2. However, progress in the older classes in key stage 2 in particular is inconsistent. In mathematics, too many older pupils are missing some of the key knowledge, language and concepts that they need to be fluent in their mathematical thinking.
- Older pupils' spelling is not good enough. Too many pupils misspell basic common words too frequently in their writing across the curriculum.
- Standards in subjects such as science, art and the humanities are not as high as they should be for the oldest pupils. A poor curriculum and inconsistent teaching over time have left key gaps in their knowledge and skills.
- Where teaching is strong, disadvantaged pupils, the most able and those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress in English and mathematics. However, this is not consistent.
- Younger pupils in the school are making stronger progress in all subjects. Standards at the end of key stage 1 are rising in reading, writing and mathematics. Almost all pupils have met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonic check.
- The most vulnerable pupils make exceptional gains in their confidence and self-esteem. As a result, they are ready and keen to access learning.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have improved the early years since the last inspection. Staff have visited other schools to help them think about the improvements they wanted to make at Harmans Water.
- Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception. The vast majority of children, including those who are disadvantaged, reach the early learning goals and are ready to start Year 1. Children with limited fine motor control are given wide-ranging and rich opportunities to develop their pencil grip. Older children use and apply their early phonic knowledge well in their writing.
- The youngest children make good gains in their personal and social development. Routines are well established and adults have high expectations. Children play together and independently for sustained periods, because they focus on the task at hand and get along well with each other. Children have good knowledge of how to stay safe in the sun.
- The curriculum is broad, balanced and exciting. Adults think hard about the learning opportunities they want to provide and the language they want children to acquire. The youngest children quickly become confident in re-telling traditional tales because adults model story language well and often.
- Transition into Nursery and Reception is well planned. Staff work closely with parents and any relevant professionals to ensure that children settle quickly and enjoy school.

- Leaders are ambitious for children. Their self-evaluation of the early years is accurate. Leaders are currently focusing on ensuring that the most able children make even better progress.

School details

Unique reference number	130949
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	10046545

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	640
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andy Taylor
Headteacher	Alison Wyld
Telephone number	01344422196
Website	www.hwps.org.uk/
Email address	secretary@harmanswater.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 November 2015

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in April 2016. Prior to this, there had been a significant number of interim leadership arrangements. For the last two years, a significant number of new teachers joined the school each year. Staffing is now stable.
- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school's early years provision consists of Nursery classes and three Reception classes.
- The school opened 'The Drey' in the spring. It is a quiet place for small groups of pupils to play and learn together.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2015, 2016 and 2017.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is broadly similar to that found nationally.

Information about this inspection

- Year 6 pupils were attending their secondary schools for the two days of this inspection. On the first day of the inspection, all pupils visited their new September classes for the afternoon.
- Inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school, sometimes with leaders.
- Inspectors and leaders reviewed a wide range of work in pupils' books. Inspectors looked at pupils' work during lessons and spoke to pupils about their learning.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders and with members of the governing body. Documents relating to governance were reviewed. A meeting was held with representatives of the local authority.
- Parents' views were considered through the 88 responses to Ofsted's online survey Parent View and in conversations with parents at the beginning of a school day.
- Pupils' views were heard through conversations with inspectors at break, lunchtime and around the school. One written communication was received. Inspectors met a group of staff, talked to staff around the school and considered 34 survey responses.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documents, including those relating to how additional funds for disadvantaged pupils are allocated. Inspectors also evaluated information relating to pupils' progress, behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding records and the central record of recruitment checks.

Inspection team

Mark Cole, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Clementina Aina	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Ashcroft	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Edwards	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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