

# Inspection of a good school: Harlestone Primary School

Church Lane, Lower Harlestone, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN7 4EN

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Inspection dates:

28 February 2023

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This small school sits at the heart of its local community. Many parents, carers and pupils would recommend the school to others. Staff know pupils very well. Pupils feel safe and happy at this school. They know there is an adult to talk to if they have a problem or worry.

Pupils talk with excitement about what they learn and read each day. Their enthusiasm is not yet matched by the quality of education that is being provided at this school. The curriculum does not allow all pupils to gain the depth of understanding they need.

Staff have high expectations of how pupils should behave. Teachers encourage pupils to be safe, ready and respectful. Pupils often demonstrate these characteristics. Pupils know what bullying is. They say that teachers would not let bullying happen here.

Pupils value the nurturing and caring ethos leaders have created at the school. Mixed-age classes allow pupils to make friends with other pupils that are older or younger than them. Younger pupils often look up to older pupils, and older pupils act as role models for younger pupils.

Pupils show great pride when teachers recognise them in assemblies for demonstrating kindness or determination.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders have made changes to the curriculum so that subjects are now discretely taught. This is better helping pupils to gain subject-specific knowledge and skills. For example, in history, pupils understand the concept of chronology. They also know how historians use sources to study the past. However, across many foundation subjects, leaders have not

identified the essential knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to know. Pupils' recall of this knowledge is often limited and they do not know and remember as much as they should.

Teachers have varying levels of knowledge for each subject. Leaders have prioritised training so that teachers develop their subject knowledge further. The logical ordering of the curriculum cycle helps pupils build on what they know in core subjects. Teachers do not always use activities and resources well enough to ensure that pupils get the depth of knowledge that is set out in the curriculum. Sometimes pupils only develop surface-level understanding. This is reflected in the work they produce.

Teachers provide support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to help them access the full curriculum. Leaders identify barriers to learning for pupils with SEND. Teachers and additional adults use this information to help pupils with SEND achieve.

Leaders have prioritised the teaching of reading. They know this unlocks pupils' potential to learn the broad curriculum. Children start learning to read as soon as they start in the Reception Year. Leaders have introduced a new scheme which helps teachers teach the sounds that letters make systematically. Staff have received training on how to teach early reading. However, the teaching of early reading is not yet consistent enough. There are occasions when teachers give too much information to pupils at once. This overloads pupils' working memory and they do not learn to read as quickly as they could. When pupils do fall behind, teachers put into place interventions to help these pupils keep up. The books that pupils read are closely matched to the letters and sounds they know. This helps pupils develop their reading skills. Pupils enjoy reading. They develop a love for books.

Children in the early years benefit from a well-organised environment. Children develop their understanding of the world, as well as their creativity, through play. For example, children are able to talk about the Great Wall of China while they try to replicate its structure on a smaller scale using sand.

The curriculum goes beyond the academic. Pupils develop a good understanding of British values. Pupils can talk about the different faiths they have learned about. Leaders have prioritised exposing children to the diversity of Britain. Pupils take part in cultural and religious celebrations such as Chinese New Year and the Hindu festival of Holi. The school council supports and encourages all members of the school community to raise money for charities. Most recently, pupils from the school have donated gifts and written letters to patients in a local hospital.

Pupils are polite and respectful. The school is very calm. Pupils are of the opinion that teachers are both strict and kind, and this helps them behave well.

Governors and leaders are making changes to improve the quality of education. While making these changes, they have supported staff and considered their workload. Staff are proud to work at this school.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils at this school well. They keep a close eye on them and report any concern, no matter how small, to the designated safeguarding leader. Staff know that the smallest change in behaviour could be a sign a pupil is at risk.

Leaders keep detailed records of concerns. They record the actions they take to keep children safe. Actions are decisive and swift.

Leaders are quick to engage with external agencies to help pupils and families that need it. Leaders also ensure that staff have the appropriate recruitment checks and safeguarding training.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not identified the essential knowledge and vocabulary in several foundation subjects. Pupils do not learn the most essential knowledge in these subjects as well as they should. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum identifies the most important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils must learn in all foundation subjects.
- Teachers do not consistently use resources and activities well enough to impart knowledge effectively. In core subjects some pupils do not gain the depth of understanding they should. Leaders must ensure that teachers use resources and activities that allow pupils to develop a depth of knowledge in all subjects.
- The teaching of early reading is not as effective as it needs to be. Some pupils do not learn to read as quickly as they should. Leaders must ensure that the new early reading curriculum is delivered effectively by all staff.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2013.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 121826   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | West Northamptonshire  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10227882   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Community  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 52   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Jon Lake   |
| <b>Teacher in charge</b>                   | Jaimie Boyling   |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.harlestone.northants.sch.uk">www.harlestone.northants.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 30 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                             |

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is federated with one other school.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in key stages 1 and 2 reading to a familiar adult.
- The lead inspector scrutinised the work pupils had produced for a range of other subjects.

- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for: behaviour; personal development; the early years foundation stage; and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils from key stages 1 and 2.
- The lead inspector met with the safeguarding leaders to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. He reviewed a range of documents related to safeguarding, including the school's single central record.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan.
- The lead inspector met with the local governing board.
- The lead inspector spoke with representatives of local authority.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and considered the results of the Ofsted staff questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

Rakesh Patel, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Gayle Bacon

Ofsted Inspector

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