

Inspection of Harlestone Primary School

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

Inspection dates: 22 and 23 May 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of this inclusive and welcoming school. As one parent said, 'It is a small school with a warm heart.' The school has successfully regained the trust of all parents in the school's provision, following a period of uncertainty. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They feel happy and safe. They know who they can talk to with any worries or concerns they may have. Relationships between pupils and with staff are highly positive and trusting. Pupils recognise how much the school has changed over the past year. They appreciate the improved school environment, both indoors and outside.

The school has transformed the curriculum. Expectations are high and pupils respond well to these. Classrooms are busy and purposeful. Pupils display positive attitudes towards learning. They are keen to show what they can do. Most pupils achieve well, although some do not achieve as well as they might.

Pupils attend and behave well. They understand the importance of treating everyone equally, showing kindness and respect. Pupils embrace the fundamental British values as well as the school's values in their interactions with one another. The school ensures that all pupils are well prepared for life in modern society.

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

Strong leadership underpins the rapid improvements made at the school since the previous inspection. Following recent changes in staffing, the school is now settled and stable. Current leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and continued priorities for development. Subject leaders have worked with determination to transform the school's curriculum. All parents, who expressed an opinion, would recommend the school. As one parent typically said, 'The effort staff have put in to make the school what it is today has not gone unnoticed.'

The school provides an ambitious and inclusive curriculum for all pupils. In almost all subjects, the curriculum builds pupils' knowledge cumulatively from the early years to Year 6. Teachers have the clarity they need about what is taught and when.

A high-quality curriculum in the early years means that pupils are well prepared for Year 1. The remodelled learning environment in Reception is stimulating and well organised. Routines are well established. Activity stations are purposeful. Children mostly enjoy high-quality interactions with adults. However, sometimes adults do not always spot when children are ready to explore increasingly complex tasks which would help them learn more.

The school has recently invested in many new texts to renew the school's culture of reading. These texts strongly support pupils' understanding of how to be responsible citizens, developing empathy and respect for people who are different from

themselves. Dedicated time for reading is prioritised each day. Pupils enjoy the interactive style of storytelling by their teachers.

The teaching of phonics and early reading is typically effective. Children learn to read as soon as they join Reception. Books are well matched to the letter sounds pupils are learning. Staff make frequent checks to ensure that pupils are ready to achieve the expected standard by the end of Year 1. Sometimes, however, staff do not consistently provide the precise support pupils need when struggling to decode and blend complex words. Nevertheless, pupils are determined to read well.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They use this well to plan engaging learning activities and to question pupils. Teachers clearly explain what they expect pupils to learn. They use a range of methods to check pupils' understanding and address misconceptions. On occasions, however, staff do not always move pupils on to more demanding tasks swiftly enough. When this happens, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

Most pupils write well. However, standards of pupils' writing are not consistently high in all subjects. Leaders recognise there is more to do to ensure that pupils develop greater confidence in applying their knowledge to extended written tasks.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. The school has strong oversight of these pupils. Staff work well with parents and external services to ensure that pupils with SEND receive the support they need. All staff have the information they need to support pupils with SEND. Most pupils with SEND achieve well from their starting points.

The school's programme for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is well considered. Pupils enjoy making a positive contribution to the life of the school, including taking on responsibilities for the school council, library and garden. The school provides a range of opportunities that nurture pupils' talents and interests, including multi-sports and playing musical instruments.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has developed a new and ambitious curriculum for all pupils. Sometimes, however, the expectations of some staff are not as consistently high as they could be. Some pupils, including children in Reception, are not moved on to more complex and challenging concepts when they are ready. As a result, some pupils do not gain new knowledge and skills as quickly as they might. The

school should ensure that all staff have the knowledge and skills they need to support every pupil to achieve as well as they can.

- Pupils do not develop their skills in writing as well as they might in all subjects. As a result, standards of pupils' writing vary between subjects. The school should ensure that all staff know how to develop pupils' writing knowledge and skills securely over time, particularly in detailed written tasks.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	121826
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10324104
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	54
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jon Lake
Headteachers	Samantha Phillips and Kirsten Carpenter (Co-headteachers)
Website	www.harlestone.northants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Althorp Federation. This is a partnership of two local schools, Harlestone and Brington primary schools.
- The co-headteachers commenced their posts in September 2023. They oversee both schools in the partnership.
- The school does not use any alternative education provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed the continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the co-headteachers and other members of staff.

- The lead inspector met with two members of the school's governing body, including the chair. He also spoke by telephone to a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, design and technology, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to leaders, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector also reviewed curriculum documentation for a range of other subjects, including geography, PSHE, physical education and science. He also reviewed a wide range of school documentation, including school policies, the use of additional government funding and the school's records for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from key stage 1 and Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. During playtime and lunchtime in the school's classrooms. They spoke with several groups of pupils both formally and informally.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and Ofsted's surveys for staff and pupils. The lead inspector also took account of the school's own survey of parents' views about the school's provision for pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of arrangements for safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Chris Stevens, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sally Wicken

Ofsted Inspector

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