



Harmans Water Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 130949
Local Authority Bracknell Forest
Inspection number 293675
Inspection dates 28 February –1 March 2007
Reporting inspector David Townsend HMI

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

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|---|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Wellington Drive |
| School category | Voluntary controlled | | Harmans Water |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 | | Bracknell RG12 9NE |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01344 422196 |
| Number on roll (school) | 663 | Fax number | 01344 302848 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair | Mrs P Leon |
| | | Headteacher | Mr M Harris |
| Date of previous school inspection | 30 April 2001 | | |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Harmans Water is a large primary school, nearly three times the average size. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities is around average, and so is the proportion with a statement of special educational need. Around ten per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. The profile of classes in the older year groups is changing because the proportion of pupils who joined the school late or left before the usual time of transfer has increased to around one quarter last year.

Key for inspection grades

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|---------|--------------|
| Grade 1 | Outstanding |
| Grade 2 | Good |
| Grade 3 | Satisfactory |
| Grade 4 | Inadequate |

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that offers pupils a caring atmosphere in which they achieve well. Many children start school with standards that are below average. The good teaching, stimulating curriculum and high levels of care enable pupils to make good progress, socially and academically. By the time they leave, standards are broadly average, which represents good progress, given their starting points. English standards are above average due to the improvements in provision made by the school. Although attainment in mathematics is weaker, the school has recognised this and is putting improvement strategies in place.

The headteacher has provided effective leadership. He has a clear vision for the school which is supported by a committed staff team and well organised governing body. The school's leadership is shared well although middle managers are not as effective as they should be in raising standards. Most pupils and parents have positive views about the school. Parents are kept well informed about pupils' learning progress.

Good provision in the Foundation Stage gives the children a positive start to their learning. The school's creative curriculum has had a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and their enjoyment. Provision for literacy is strong, but the planning for mathematics is not firmly based on assessments of pupils' needs. The marking of pupils' work is also of a variable quality across the school.

Leaders in school set clear direction for improvement. The issues raised at the last inspection have been fully addressed. The school's view of itself was slightly more generous than that of the inspection team. However, the school has been successful in identifying and improving aspects of the education it provides. For example, the school has accurately identified pupils' writing needs through periodic formal assessments and then tailored teaching approaches to reflect their starting points more accurately. This track record, combined with its strong ethos of confident and caring team-work, confirm its good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Help pupils to make faster progress in mathematics by matching work more closely to their ability.
- Sharpen the role middle managers play in monitoring, evaluating and improving teaching and learning.
- Improve marking, to help all pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good due to the good teaching across each year group. Pupils enter school with below average knowledge, skills and understanding, especially in language,

communication and mathematics. By the time they leave school, standards are broadly average, which represents good progress given the pupils' starting points.

Children get off to a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. They make good progress in these classes and in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, standards are slightly above average in English. In mathematics, standards are average and pupils' progress is good due to the better teaching that now exists in this subject for these age groups.

Inspection findings show that pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress. Achievement has improved in English and current standards are above average. Pupils capable of reaching the higher levels are doing so. Standards are average in science. Progress in mathematics has improved in recent months and pupils are catching up lost ground. However, standards are slightly below average because the improvements made are too recent and inconsistencies in provision still exist.

Those pupils who join the school late have sometimes underachieved in previous schools but catch up well because of the support they are given. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress and meet the challenging targets set for them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Parents report that their children enjoy coming to school. As one pupil said, 'I like school because it is fun and you make friends.' Pupils generally behave well. Incidents of poor behaviour at break times are rare and are promptly dealt with. Pupils enjoy good relationships with peers and adults. The headteacher is an excellent role model: he knows and greets all pupils individually. Attendance is average.

Pupils are outstanding in the way they take up the very many opportunities for physical activity. Most attend sports clubs and attend the daily, energetic dancing in 'Kickstart' before school. However, they are not following such a healthy lifestyle in their eating habits. For example, many pupils' lunch boxes include crisps and chocolate although meals provided by the school present healthy options.

Spiritual and moral development is good but cultural development is only satisfactory. Pupils reflect thoughtfully on sensitive issues in assembly and they have a strong sense of right and wrong. However, their understanding of cultures other than their own is weak. Pupils contribute very well to the running of their school and they readily take on responsibility. For example, pupils run dance sessions and act as peer mentors. Older pupils help the younger ones. Additionally, there is a school council and pupils organise charity fund raising and collect litter in the community. The responsibilities they are given help to prepare pupils for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and is helping pupils across the school to progress well in their learning. Teachers generally plan their work well to match the pupils' different levels of need. This is helping all groups to make good progress. Teachers generally make their lessons lively and interesting, often by using information and communication technology well. As a result, pupils show good interest and enjoyment, and they behave well. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported by effective teaching assistants. In a few outstanding lessons seen, teachers used strong subject expertise to tailor activities closely to pupils' needs and to move their learning on at pace by questioning, explaining and instructing the class with skill.

However, teaching is not consistently good across all subjects and classes. For example, teaching in mathematics is not as good as in English. Assessment information is not used as well to plan lessons in this subject. Therefore, in some lessons, the teaching is not sufficiently adapted to take account of pupils' prior learning. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent between subjects. It is better in English than mathematics. Sometimes pupils receive excellent comments, which help them to know how well they have done and how to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that promotes pupils' enjoyment of learning. It has been revised to promote creativity and practical learning experiences. For example, the recent inclusion of a study of India should help to address the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding of other communities. Recent developments in art have resulted in some outstanding work which has further developed pupils' creativity and enjoyment. The provision for English is good and in particular writing is given sufficient emphasis. Opportunities for developing literacy across the whole curriculum are well established. Pupils participate in a wide range of enrichment activities particularly in sports and physical activity and sing very well together in assemblies. Visitors from the community and outings to places of interest all add to pupils' enjoyment of learning. However pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop and use their mathematical understanding in other subjects.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care guidance and support are good. The relationships between pupils and staff are very good. Pupils feel secure and safe in school and know to whom they can turn in any kind of trouble or if they are anxious. Pupils are carefully supervised at break times and lunchtimes and have good social skills. There are secure procedures concerning

child protection and health and safety. Parents are mostly very positive about the school and agree that their children are looked after well.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have well designed individual education plans, with clear learning targets. The plans are implemented well. Provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is carefully reviewed at key points in the year and refined in the light of these evaluations. Outside agencies and visiting specialists are invited to these reviews in order to make sure that pupils are receiving suitable education and support. The school keeps parents well informed about the progress of their children through the parents' evenings and the end of year progress reports.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has successfully promoted a culture for learning and a community-minded ethos. The senior leaders have guided the school well and developed good participation by the school community in decision making. The school's self-evaluation is secure and these assessments have helped to focus on key priorities in the improvement plan. Achievement has improved because the school has taken decisive action to sharpen how it predicts and monitors pupils' progress. Teaching approaches have been adapted and improved in the light of close analysis of pupils' learning needs. The curriculum has been modified to make it more relevant to pupils' lives and more stimulating. Leadership responsibilities are being shared across the staff team. However, middle managers are not effective enough in raising standards. Some opportunities are missed to use their subject expertise to greater effect in improving areas of weakness. This has led to inconsistency in the rate of improvement across subjects, especially mathematics. Governors are supportive and very involved in the work of the school. They are well led by its chair and hold the school to account well, asking searching questions of senior managers before targets are set and strategic decisions are made. The school uses its resources well to provide a stimulating environment and high quality learning opportunities and so offers good value for money.

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Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|-----------------------|

Overall effectiveness

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| How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners? | 2 |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 |
| The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | 2 |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes |

Achievement and standards

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| How well do learners achieve? | 2 |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 3 |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 2 |

Personal development and well-being

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|---|---|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 |

The quality of provision

| | |
|---|---|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 2 |

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 2 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

We really enjoyed our visit to your school. You made us all feel very welcome. You and your parents think it is a good school where you are taught and learn well. We agree with you.

Here are the things that we think are best about your school:

- you enjoy school and the interesting lessons that teachers offer
- you are making good progress in your learning, especially in reading and writing
- the staff team are very committed to helping you to succeed and your headteacher leads the school well
- you join in with activities for healthy living very well
- your artwork is outstanding and your singing together was a joy to hear.

What could be even better:

- your test results show you are doing better in English than mathematics. We have asked your teachers to continue checking your progress and telling you how to improve your work more often
- we think the teachers could also use this information more to plan numeracy lessons and other mathematics activities in school
- we would like all leaders in school to be fully involved in helping the school continue to improve even more.

How you can help:

- some of you chatter a little in class and might try to listen better
- you all love to keep fit and so now you might all try to eat healthily too.

With best wishes

David Townsend

Her Majesty's Inspector.