

Hardwick Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122999
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314450
Inspection dates	20–21 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Graham Stephens

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	226
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr B Wegerhoff
Headteacher	Mrs J Hawkin
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2004
School address	Ferriston Banbury OX16 1XE
Telephone number	01295 258355
Fax number	01295 275242

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Pupils, in this average size primary school, come from a variety of backgrounds. The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language is increasing and is now slightly above average. The number of pupils with moderate learning difficulties or disabilities is much higher than in most schools. The school has recently experienced a high turnover of staff. The school was awarded the Activemark in 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Hardwick is an improving school. Standards are low in English, mathematics and science and some pupils still make slow progress, even given their very low starting points. However, this legacy of underachievement is recognised and the school is now taking urgent action to accelerate the progress of all pupils. This unsatisfactory progress has been caused by weaknesses in teaching in the past and failing to organise the information gained from tracking pupils' progress to target work consistently to meet their needs. Attempts to address this underachievement have been hampered by severe disruption to staffing in recent years because of high turnover and levels of sickness. The school also acknowledges previous weaknesses in assessing pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1. Procedures are now stronger and more reliable. A climate conducive to learning is securely established and teaching has improved. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties or who find aspects of language and mathematics difficult as well as those for whom English is an additional language, now make satisfactory progress. This is because of the effective additional support these pupils receive. The school is in a stronger position to tackle underachievement and raise standards. Its capacity to improve is satisfactory.

Improving behaviour and pupils' attitudes has been a high priority for the school. As a result of developing the curriculum, so that it successfully engages pupils, and by creating a calm ethos conducive to learning, behaviour has improved. The number of exclusions has also plummeted. There are fewer disrupted lessons and learning is therefore better. The school is a very caring community and all adults make the care and support of the pupils their top priority. Pupils are beginning to make better progress because support is tailored more to their needs and the quality of teaching is improving. However, teaching is not yet consistently good throughout the school. Some pupils, including the more able, are not challenged enough and neither do they have enough opportunities to apply the skills they are taught. Significant improvements in the Foundation Stage ensure a secure start for the children in all areas of learning and many are making good progress.

Pupils' personal development is good, driven by the very good provision for pastoral care. Relationships between all adults and pupils are good. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected by their satisfactory attendance. They feel very safe and secure. 'I am very pleased with Hardwick School, my children enjoy going there,' said one parent. Academic guidance is satisfactory. The school has developed systems to monitor, track and support pupils. However, the collation of data demands much of the headteacher's time. Also, the information gained is not used consistently in all classes to ensure that pupils of all abilities are given the opportunity to excel. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Recent changes have seen an enthusiastic response from teachers and pupils but it is early days and recent work has yet to be evaluated to ensure a clear progression in the teaching of skills. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is good and careful planning ensures that pupils have good access to the six areas of learning.

The headteacher provides strong leadership. She has led the school well through difficult times. Self-evaluation, although generally accurate, is not always rigorous. Not all staff are sufficiently involved in self-review procedures. The information gained from tracking pupils' progress is not always organised effectively so that leaders have a clear and up-to-date overview of the impact that teaching is having on the progress that pupils make. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are beginning to hold the school to account for the standards achieved.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Very good relationships underpin the provision of a safe and secure learning environment. The Foundation Stage is managed well. Systems to monitor and record significant developments in children's understanding and skills are established and these indicate that many make good progress in most areas of learning, including speaking, listening and reading. This is because of recent improvements in the way letter sounds are taught and the introduction of new reading materials that have interested and motivated the pupils. Progress is much slower in writing. Children interact well with adults. They approach visitors confidently and are keen to involve them in their activities. There is an appropriate balance between child-initiated and adult-led activities. Sometimes opportunities to promote learning are lost either because adults are too focussed in supporting one activity or because the learning opportunity is not acknowledged.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and accelerate progress in English, mathematics and science, particularly for more able pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good throughout the school.
- Make effective use of assessment data to identify and remedy underperformance and to ensure that all pupils achieve well.
- Ensure the curriculum provides a clear progression in the teaching of skills and builds on pupils' prior attainment.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in Key Stages 1 and 2 are well below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This reflects the low starting points of the pupils and that the school receives few pupils with high prior attainment. Although pupils make satisfactory progress, there remain pockets of underachievement, particularly in Year 2 in writing and some more able pupils. Good progress in identifying the large number of pupils who find aspects of English and mathematics difficult, and whose needs had previously been overlooked, has been made. This situation occurred because of weaknesses in the systems for assessing pupils' learning needs and monitoring their progress in the past. These pupils now make satisfactory progress. They receive good quality help from skilled teaching assistants. Work to help support pupils with specific difficulties with numeracy, for example, is proving successful and results in these pupils being more able to focus on their studies. Pupils with English as an additional language sometimes make good progress, particularly in improving their reading skills, but their progress is satisfactory in other areas.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils relate well to one another and respect others' beliefs and cultural backgrounds. They understand what constitutes a healthy lifestyle and attendance at sporting activities after school is good. They know how to

keep safe and demonstrate this in lessons and by their responsible conduct around the school. Behaviour is generally good and bullying is not an issue for pupils. Pupils' attitudes towards their education are good. 'Our headteacher keeps us safe and our class teacher makes learning fun in lessons', typifies the response of a group of Year 6 pupils. Pupils satisfactorily develop skills in citizenship through the school council and the opportunities provided for them to take on greater responsibility as they get older. Their good social skills help prepare them for the next phase of their education and in becoming life-long learners. However, this strength is offset by weaknesses in basic numeracy and literacy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is inconsistent between key stages. The proportion of good lessons is not yet high enough to overcome gaps in pupils' knowledge and to enable them to make good progress. Pupils who struggle with aspects of mathematics and language are now identified. Assistants support and motivate them well and in most classes work is well organised for their needs. As a result, their rate of progress is improving and it is now satisfactory. In some lessons, whilst work is well matched for lower and sometimes middle achieving pupils, the tasks fail to engage more able pupils and means they do not make good progress. Even with the recent improvements to the curriculum, these pupils have too few opportunities to apply the skills they are taught. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good and their relationships with teachers promote a positive and enjoyable learning environment. Planning for most lessons is thorough. Many include opportunities for speaking and listening that are beginning to improve the quality of writing in some classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Recent changes to the curriculum have emphasised the links between subjects to make them more relevant to pupils and to give them more opportunities to apply and further develop their numeracy, language and science skills. This has had a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and their enjoyment. However, it is early days and the changes have yet to be fully evaluated to measure their impact on standards and achievement. Neither does the curriculum provide a secure structure for teachers' planning to ensure continuity and progression in the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. The school's good emphasis on personal, social and health education has led to the good personal development and well-being of pupils. The curriculum is further enriched by a wide range of visits, visitors and a range of well attended extra-curricular activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pupils are very well supported when they join and leave the school because very good liaison procedures exist to ensure smooth transfers. Effective systems encourage pupils to behave well and treat each other and adults with respect. The school is vigilant about health and safety and child-protection matters and provides good quality day-to-day care for pupils. The academic guidance given to pupils is satisfactory overall, although it has some good features. There is sometimes good quality dialogue between teachers and pupils whenever work is marked. This

often provides clear information about what pupils need to do to improve. However, it is not consistent and the suggestions made are not always acted on by the pupils. Pupils have learning targets to achieve, but these are generally group targets and do not always provide enough challenge for higher attaining individuals within the group.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has led the school well through the recent period of disruption. Through this period the school has developed into a harmonious and caring community based securely on mutual support and good quality care. The recently formed Leadership and Management Team (LMT) is determined to raise standards and accelerate progress throughout the school. It understands the urgent need to improve the overall quality of teaching. This is regularly monitored but there is too much emphasis on what happens rather than the impact of teaching on learning. Monitoring and tracking procedures of pupils' progress are in place but need to be better organised so that information can be used well by the LMT to closely track the impact of teaching on their rate of progress. The roles of curriculum coordinators are developing and they are all involved in the on-going development of the curriculum. Their monitoring role will develop further when the changes to the curriculum are finalised and there is a clearer structure in place. Governors, well led by the Chair, are now beginning to hold the school to account for the standards achieved.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

06 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hardwick Primary School, Banbury, OX16 1XE

I would like to thank you for being so polite, friendly and helpful when inspectors came to visit your school. We enjoyed meeting you, looking at your work and hearing about all the interesting things that you do.

We think you go to a satisfactory and improving school.

We think there are many things that happen in your school that are good and here are some of them.

- Your behaviour is good and you support each other very well.
- Your teachers care for you very well.
- They plan many exciting and interesting things for you to do.
- You all understand how to live a healthy lifestyle, and many of you do.

Every school has something that could be better. We think you need to read the comments that teachers write in your books very carefully and listen closely to what they say, so that you always know what to do to improve your work. We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to track your progress very carefully and set you challenging targets to help you do better in reading, writing, mathematics and science. We have asked all your teachers to match work carefully to your ability and to teach you well throughout the school. We have also asked your teachers to look carefully at all the subjects to make sure that you develop skills well and increase your knowledge and understanding in everything you are taught.

With very best wishes for your future success.

Yours sincerely

Graham Stephens

Lead Inspector