

# Harwich Community Primary School and Nursery

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114843
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	338463
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 November 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	224
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lawrie Payne
<b>Headteacher</b>	Valerie Metcalf
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Barrack Lane Harwich Essex
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<b>Email address</b>	admin@harwich-pri.essex.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 14 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and some parents. They looked at samples of pupils' work, analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures, the school improvement plan, the school profile and the questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 84 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- opportunities for and attainment in writing for girls and boys, and pupils of different abilities
- how teaching and assessment are helping pupils of all abilities to learn, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the extent to which pupils have a clear picture of how well they are doing and what they need to do to do better.

## Information about the school

In this average size school, the large majority of pupils are of White British background. A small number of pupils are learning English as an additional language. At around 40%, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is twice the national average. The range of needs covered is wide, but the largest group have moderate learning difficulties. Mobility is high, with an above average proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school partway through their primary education. The school is part of a local network of schools, which funds mentoring support for pupils and their families. A breakfast club is run for pupils before the start of the school day. Harwich Primary has a Healthy Schools award and Sports Activemark. The headteacher was appointed in September 2008, having previously been acting headteacher, and before that, the deputy headteacher.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This school has come a long way since its last inspection. Attainment in each of the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science is now broadly average, and this represents a sharp and sustained rise in standards. Although pupils' writing remains weaker than their other key skills, the standards that girls and boys reach in all of the key skills represent good progress in relation to their starting points.

This has been achieved through teaching that motivates pupils so that they are increasingly keen to learn. When teachers have very high expectations of what their pupils can achieve, it is noticeable that the pupils readily rise to the challenge. Pupils behave well and are attentive in lessons and they generally settle without fuss to individual work. The poor presentation of some pupils' work sometimes lets them down, however. Marking is much improved since the last inspection. It gives pupils clear feedback on how they can improve their work, but teachers are not always rigorous enough in correcting spelling mistakes or inaccurate punctuation.

School leaders have drawn very effectively on a number of local authority and national initiatives as part of their successful drive to raise standards. Particularly good use is made by teachers of the assessment systems for keeping track of pupils' progress that were introduced when the school was part of the Improving Schools Programme. These are used to quickly identify where any pupil is falling behind and to put in place well-targeted support to help them catch up. The curriculum has been developed through the school's excellent partnership working with a wide range of outside organisations. Pupils are especially enthusiastic about the outdoor learning areas that they have helped to develop and which give them the chance to grow healthy food. Links between different subjects are better developed in some classes than others, however. In some classes, an overdependence on often unchallenging worksheets limits opportunities for pupils of all abilities, and especially the more able, to develop and apply their writing skills.

The school caters well for its many pupils with special educational needs that cover a very wide range of learning difficulties and physical disabilities. These pupils are well supported and this helps them to make good progress. For some, the progress made is outstanding. It is more able pupils who do not always make as much progress as they should; especially where the work they are given is not matched to their abilities. This is evident in the relatively low proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 in the Year 2 assessments or Level 5 in the Year 6 national tests. Arrangements to involve pupils in evaluating their learning are at an early stage in their introduction. There is scope for more able pupils, in particular, to take a more active role in assessing their own and each other's work.

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The school owes its success to the shared vision and drive of the headteacher, leadership team, staff and governors. Monitoring of teaching and of all aspects of the school's work have helped school leaders and governors to identify and tackle weaknesses, enabling them to improve provision, for example, in the Reception Year. Their success in tackling the issues from the last inspection, in improving teaching and learning, and in the sharp and sustained rise in standards and rates of progress show this school's good capacity for continued improvement.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise standards in writing by the end of the summer term 2010 by
  - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length
  - reducing the dependence in some classes on worksheets in humanities and science
  - encouraging pupils to take greater care over their handwriting and the presentation of their work
  - ensuring a rigorous focus on correct spelling and the technical accuracy of pupils' writing.
- Increase the proportion of pupils attaining Level 3 in the Year 2 assessments and Level 5 in the Year 6 national tests from 2011 by
  - ensuring that more able pupils are routinely set work in lessons that challenges and extends them
  - giving able pupils more opportunities to record work in their own words
  - helping pupils to think more about the quality of their work and how to improve it by providing them with opportunities to evaluate their own and each other's work.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils' academic achievement has improved enormously. Progress measures from pupils' starting points, which in 2006 put the school in the bottom 5% nationally, have shot up since so that the school has performed in or around the top 10% for the past two years. The work seen in lessons and from pupils' books shows that this good progress continues for both girls and boys, and especially for the many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Those pupils who join the school part-way through their primary education, including the small number joining from overseas and who are at an early stage of learning English, are well supported so that they make similar progress to their peers.

The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in the Year 6 national tests rose in 2009, but this figure still remains below average. Again, this mirrors the picture from lessons and pupils' books, which show that more able pupils are not always set work that stretches them.

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'I am very impressed with the way children of different ages all mix together and look after each other.' This comment from a parent accurately sums up the good relationships that have become an important hallmark of this school. Although some parents voice worries about behaviour, the pupils themselves describe how this has improved. They express confidence that, if any bullying occurs, it is dealt with quickly. As a result, pupils feel safe at school and they have a good understanding of how to keep safe. They learn, for example, about safe cycling. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities as prefects. Those who join the school council take their roles seriously, although there is scope to involve them more in decisions around the school.

Pupils show a strong appreciation of the need for regular exercise and a healthy diet. They take a growing interest in gardening. Through the Creative Partnerships programme, a government initiative that links creative professionals with schools, each class has developed its own allotment where they produce vegetables for use in the kitchen and sale to parents.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Teachers manage their classes well so that pupils are attentive and engaged. Question and answer sessions are lively, and pupils are keen to join in. In the older classes, almost every hand goes up as all are eager to have a go. Varied activities help to ensure that pupils do not have to spend long periods listening passively. Teaching assistants are well deployed so that the many pupils who rely on extra help with their learning receive the support that they need. This has been a key factor in the accelerated progress since the last inspection. Although teachers have generally raised their expectations of what their pupils can achieve, they do not always expect enough of their more able pupils. This is especially apparent in those lessons where pupils are all given the same worksheets to complete. Where there is a heavy diet of worksheets, which is the case in science and humanities in some classes, this limits opportunities for pupils to develop and apply their writing skills.

The school is still in the process of developing the way in which subjects are linked together so that pupils develop their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. This is much more established at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils are enthusiastic about the wide range of clubs and other out-of-school activities provided for them, and the participation rate is high.

Pupils are helped to improve their work because they benefit from marking that sets out for them the next steps in their learning. When teachers pose a question in their marking, they expect the pupils to respond. This dialogue prompts the pupils to think more about their work. Plans to involve pupils more in evaluating their own and each other's work are still at a relatively early stage, however. Pupils know their targets but, because the same targets are shared by large groups of pupils, the targets are not always as sharply focused as they should be on pupils' individual learning needs.

The arrangements to support pupils and their families are an important feature of this school. Support services have been developed through Harwich Primary's strong partnership arrangements, including through the 'COAST-ed' network of local schools. Some of the parents told inspectors how much they had been helped and how facilities such as the breakfast club and the coffee mornings to discuss parenting problems have had a positive impact at home as well as at school. The school caters well for its many vulnerable pupils. Rigorous procedures to chase up absences and to discourage holidays in term time have brought attendance figures up so that these are now in line with those of schools nationally and rather better than for schools in similar circumstances.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

The improvements throughout this school have been achieved through the headteacher, leadership team, staff and governors working together with a shared commitment to succeed. Key to this has been greatly raised expectations of pupils' personal development and academic achievement. The school's improvement plan is tightly focused on very well chosen priorities - another improvement since the last inspection - although not all of its success criteria are sharp enough. The school has worked hard to involve parents but with limited success; the response rate to its surveys of parental views has been quite low.

Equality is promoted well throughout the school. Whereas, in some previous years, girls have done less well than boys, this is not now the case. The school works as a harmonious community, with pupils learning to value and take an interest in the different backgrounds of the small number of pupils who join the school from overseas. The school is heavily involved in the local community, but pupils have had relatively few opportunities to learn about the tapestry of different cultures in this country. Governors appreciate that they could do more to evaluate the impact of the school's work in promoting community cohesion.

The school is vigilant in ensuring that checks are made on the suitability of all adults working with children. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out for school trips, although these are not formally in place for all activities, including the breakfast club.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage



**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

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Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is much improved this year following the recent reorganisation of staffing, although changes are too recent to show through in a sustained track record of raised standards, as seen in Key Stages 1 and 2,. The school's open door policy ensures good relationships and close contact with families before children start school. As a result, children are helped to settle quickly into daily routines. Staff work well together as a team to ensure that children feel happy and secure.

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is low. Children are continuously assessed in the Nursery and their progress carefully tracked. Assessment systems in the Reception class have improved this year and the now more continuous tracking of children's progress from Nursery to the end of the Reception Year is helping children make steadily good progress. However, attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage remains below average, especially in communication, language and literacy.

Staff make use of an attractive learning environment with vibrant displays and a good range of resources, both indoor and outside, to interest children and stimulate their imagination. As a result, children greatly enjoy their learning. This was evident from their activity in the wildlife area where, having previously discovered an indentation in the ground which they took to be a giant's footprint, they worked together to build a 'giant's house' and collected sticks for a 'fire to keep the giant warm'.

Children are encouraged to be independent learners. This was seen in the Nursery where they take responsibility to distribute snacks at break-time and tidy up after a session. Nevertheless, not enough opportunities are planned for well-focused activities in communication, language and literacy. School leaders have recognised this and drawn this year on local authority advice to further develop this area of learning.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

**Views of parents and carers**

Parents express generally positive views about the school. There are concerns from some parents about behaviour but inspectors saw only good behaviour, both in lessons and around the school, and the pupils themselves confirmed that any incidents of misbehaviour were dealt with effectively.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harwich Community Primary and Nursery School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 84 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 224 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	35	42	43	51	6	7	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	39	48	57	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	23	27	47	56	11	13	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	30	44	52	11	13	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	25	30	53	63	2	2	4	5
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	30	47	56	7	8	3	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	25	55	65	6	7	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	18	21	48	57	6	7	4	5
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	24	56	67	5	6	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	21	45	54	9	11	6	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	23	46	55	8	10	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	23	27	43	51	6	7	5	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	32	38	48	57	3	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



14 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harwich Community Primary and Nursery School, Harwich CO12 3NP

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to visit your school. We were pleased to see how much your school has improved over the past three years. Harwich is a good school where you are making good progress. Those of you who need extra help with your learning do especially well because you benefit from good support, but you all benefit from the good teaching in your well run school. We were very pleased to see such good behaviour and how well you all get on. You listen well in lessons and are keen to take part, and that is having a big impact on your increasing confidence and academic success.

You are rightly proud of your school, but we were sorry to see that some of you do not take quite as much pride in the presentation of your work. Some of you make mistakes which are simply due to the untidiness of your writing. You can certainly help to do even better by taking greater care with your handwriting and the presentation of your work. We have also asked the school to give you all more opportunities to practise and develop your writing skills and to make sure that your teachers tell you when your punctuation and spelling slip.

Although you are doing well at Harwich, some of you could be doing even better. We would like more of you to reach the higher levels in the Year 2 and Year 6 tests. With that in mind, we have asked your teachers to make sure that they are all setting you work that stretches you. You can help here too by telling your teacher if you think your work is too easy. We have asked that you be given more opportunities to record things in your own words. We have also asked the school to look at some more ways they can involve you in assessing your own and each other's work. That too will help you to think about how you can improve your work even more.

Thank you again for looking after us on our visit and our very best wishes for the future. We hope you go on to do as well when you go on to secondary school as you have here at Harwich Primary.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward

Lead inspector

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