

# Harlowbury Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115056
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	338501
<b>Inspection dates</b>	29–30 March 2010
<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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	140
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Teresa Keane
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sheila Lewis-Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 November 2006
<b>School address</b>	Watlington Road Old Harlow Harlow
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 10 lessons and observed five teachers. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and they spoke to parents. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures, school leaders' and local authority monitoring records, school improvement planning, risk assessments, and the questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 65 parents and carers.

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

- the reasons for any variation in the progress of boys and girls and those of different capabilities, including pupils with statements of special educational needs and those in the Speech and Language Centre
- the effectiveness of provision for science
- the quality of provision and improvements in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about the school

This school is smaller than average and pupil numbers have reduced. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with others coming from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. A very small number are learning English as an additional language. Although the percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average, a very high proportion of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils with statements is exceptionally high because the school incorporates a Speech and Language Centre that caters for pupils with these difficulties from across the west and north-west of the county. Pupil mobility has been high, with an above average proportion leaving and joining the school partway through their primary education. With the exception of the Reception class, all pupils are now taught in mixed-age classes, although that was not the case in upper Key Stage 2 prior to this year. Harlowbury has the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. There is a privately-run pre-school on the school site which is separately inspected.

**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?**

**3**

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

**3**

## Main findings

In its mission statement, Harlowbury describes its values as those of 'warmth, acceptance and inclusion'. Pupils and their parents certainly appreciate the friendly, welcoming environment that the school provides. A notable strength of the school is the Speech and Language Centre, which provides specialist support for pupils from across a wide swathe of Essex. Even though the Centre is temporarily understaffed, it succeeds in boosting the progress of its pupils through activities that are very well matched to their needs. The pupils mix with those in the regular classes during the afternoons so that they are fully included in the life of the school.

Provision for other pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is not all of the same high standard. Although these pupils are often well supported in class, their individual education plans (IEPs) do not all set out clear enough targets for pupils to aim for to help them progress. Parents and the pupils themselves are not sufficiently involved in drawing up the IEPs. Provision in the Early years Foundation Stage is inadequate. Children's progress is too slow and, despite some recent improvements, the provision does not cater adequately for children's learning needs. However, progress is satisfactory through the school as a whole, with pupils mostly attaining average standards by the end of Year 6. Progress has generally been slower in science than in English and mathematics because able pupils are not challenged enough to think for themselves in this subject. Pupils enjoy the links being made between subjects as part of their science and other topic work, but opportunities are missed to capitalise on their enthusiasm by, for example, asking them, when they start a new topic, what questions they particularly want to find the answers to.

Staff all know the pupils well, and this contributes to Harlowbury's family atmosphere which is much praised by parents. The pupils like their teachers. They mostly listen well to them, but they do not listen quite so carefully to each other's contributions in lessons. This sometimes slows the pace of learning. Pace also slows when teachers allow too long for routine tasks. When there is a lack of urgency in, for example, writing out the date and title for a piece of work, pupils do not always go on to produce sufficient high quality written work. Pupils have targets and they benefit from some insightful marking, especially in English and mathematics, that sets out the 'next steps' in their learning. This is not consistent in all subjects throughout the school, however.

School self-evaluation, based on monitoring of lessons and pupils' work and drawing well on the support provided by the local authority, has given leaders an accurate picture of the school's strengths and of areas for development. Together with arrangements for tracking pupils' progress that are much improved since the last inspection, this shows Harlowbury's satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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Leaders have demonstrated particular success in building productive partnerships with outside agencies and other schools, including the local secondary school that offers sports coaching to Harlowbury pupils.

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

- By the autumn term 2010, provide a better start for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by
  - establishing clear boundaries for the children so that all know what is expected of them and they learn to follow the school's orderly routines
  - pacing activities so that children are not expected to wait passively for them to start
  - ensuring the reliability of assessments so that children's progress is carefully tracked through all the areas of learning and staff use the information to tailor activities to children's individual learning needs
  - creating a more attractive and stimulating learning environment, both inside and outdoors.
- By the autumn term 2010, accelerate pupils' learning by
  - developing strategies for encouraging pupils to listen to each other's ideas in lessons
  - raising the staff's expectations of the amount of work pupils are capable of doing
  - increasing the pace of lessons so that more is accomplished
  - involving pupils more in developing the curriculum by checking at the start of each topic the questions that they would each like to find out about
  - giving pupils in both Key Stage 1 and 2 clear guidance through marking that sets out the next steps needed to move their learning on in all subjects
  - giving more able pupils opportunities to form their own hypotheses, devise investigations and find their own ways of recording their results in science
  - ensuring greater rigour in maintaining the individual educational plans for all pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by fully involving parents and the pupils themselves in identifying clear targets for progress.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils make satisfactory progress, and their attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average. Attainment was low in 2009, but that group had very low starting points and a quarter of them had statements of special educational needs. Nevertheless, these pupils

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made satisfactory progress in relation to their capabilities. There has been some variation from year to year in the relative performance of boys. Again, in 2009, boys did much less well than girls. This was because many of those with significant difficulties were boys. Pupils' current work and the evidence of the school's progress-tracking data show that, in the current Year 6, boys are doing at least as well as girls. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, although progress is more rapid for those who attend the Speech and Language Centre. The small number of pupils learning English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers as do those who join the school partway through their primary education. A parent of a child new to the school wrote to praise the way 'the school has built up her confidence, and her work in all subjects is so much better'.

Pupils enjoy school and they show that they are capable of working with concentration and effort. They sometimes have to be reminded of the need to concentrate, however. Inspectors saw good behaviour in almost every lesson and around the school. However, many parents and pupils complain that behaviour is not always as good. Some pupils express alarm at the sometimes rough playground play of a small number of the older boys, although they are confident that staff will deal with any problems that occur. Pupils know that exercise and a healthy diet are important, although some are confused about why they should be eating some foods in preference to others.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</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

<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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<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>
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## How effective is the provision?

Teachers make increasing use of assessment information to plan lessons that cater for the range of capabilities of the pupils in their classes. They set out mostly clear lesson objectives and success criteria so that the pupils know what they should be learning. Support staff help those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enabling even those with a high level of need to be fully included. In the most effective lessons, pupils are given a range of varied tasks that mean they get a lot done in the time available, but this is not a consistent feature of teaching across the school. Teachers make frequent use in lessons of 'talk partners', where pupils are asked to exchange ideas with the person sitting next to them. After their 'talk partner' discussion, pupils tend to just report back what they themselves have said rather than on their partner's contribution. Consequently, this process does not contribute as much as it could to developing pupils' listening and communication skills. The pupils in the Speech and Language Centre make good progress because they benefit from teaching, support and a curriculum that are very carefully tailored to their specific learning needs.

Pupils enjoy the topics that have been introduced to link together learning across different subjects. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, applied what they had learnt in literacy about descriptive writing to compose thoughtful diary accounts as 'eye-witnesses' of Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem. Although the topics feed pupils' enthusiasm, there is scope for involving the pupils more in finding things out for themselves.

Staff take good care of the pupils, drawing well on partnerships with outside agencies to bolster the support provided. The school has had notable success in improving attendance to average levels when, previously, it was significantly lower. Pupils in the Speech and Language Centre are very well catered for, enabling them to fully access the curriculum and, increasingly, to be fully included in activities with their peers.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<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>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Some parents are unhappy that the fall in pupil numbers has necessitated a move to mixed-age classes throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, but school leaders have succeeded in

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maintaining the confidence of parents through this period of substantial change. Leaders' monitoring has improved since the last inspection and has now accurately identified where the pace of learning needs to be accelerated. Comprehensive arrangements for tracking of pupils' progress have led to more ambitious, but nonetheless realistic target-setting throughout the school that is helping to drive improvement. Leaders focus appropriately on equality of opportunity; they are careful to analyse and take action to eliminate any differences in the rates of progress between identifiable groups, including boys and girls, as have occurred in some previous year groups.

Governors are very supportive and they fully share the school leaders' vision of Harlowbury as a nurturing environment. They visit regularly and know the school well, but they have not been rigorous enough in ensuring that required documentation is fully up-to-date, for example, pupils' IEPs. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory and meet requirements, although some risk assessments, for example, for the playground, are not as thorough as others such as those for school trips. Governors have maintained an audit of the school's contribution to community cohesion. In this, the principal focus has been on developing the school's strong links with the local community, but there have been email links with a school in Brisbane and a project has recently been launched to develop links with a school in Hackney to broaden pupils' awareness of life in another part of Britain. The introduction of French in Key Stage 2, two years ago, has given pupils a small taste of another European culture.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</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>3</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**



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

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Changes of staffing have meant that the Early Years Foundation Stage has been through some upheaval. It has had regular monitoring from the local authority and this charts some recent improvements. The classroom has been decluttered, and the creation of a sheltered area has extended the use that children make of the outdoor area.

Nevertheless, these areas provide too little to stimulate children's interest or to promote learning. There are, for example, displays of letter and sound combinations but no accompanying visual cues linking the sounds to everyday objects. Local authority monitoring confirms that inaccuracy of previous assessments have left the school with an unclear picture of how well children have done in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Suitable arrangements for assessing children and keeping a track of their progress are still in the process of being developed. Staff do not make sufficient use of assessment to ensure that all the children are engaged in appropriately pitched activities, especially when almost all the class are learning together. Pace is lost and some children get fidgety and lose concentration when they have to sit unoccupied on the carpet for several minutes waiting for a session to start. Although the children generally get on well together, they do not listen to each other. Staff have not communicated to children clearly enough what is expected of them. As a result, the children have been slow to conform to everyday routines.

These factors slow children's progress in the areas of learning and mean that they do not get off to a fast enough start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, parents are, nonetheless, pleased with their children's introduction to school in the Reception Year. They appreciate, in particular, the recent improvements they have seen in their partnership with school. Staff now visit the children at home before they start in the Reception class, and the school has developed improved links with the privately-run pre-school that shares the school site.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	4

**Views of parents and carers**

Many parents express fulsome praise for the school. A significant minority of parents voice worries about behaviour. Inspectors saw mostly good behaviour in lessons and around the school, and the behaviour seen was never less than satisfactory. However, pupils report that incidents of misbehaviour do occur from time to time.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harlowbury Primary 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 65 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 140 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	46	32	49	3	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	49	32	49	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	36	55	28	43	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	47	31	47	2	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	32	49	30	46	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	40	35	54	4	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	41	35	54	2	3	0	0
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)	26	40	30	46	3	5	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	29	45	33	51	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	35	26	40	10	15	3	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	43	30	46	1	2	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	32	49	27	42	2	3	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	52	28	43	2	3	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.**



31 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harlowbury Primary School, Harlow, CM17 0DX

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We were pleased to hear that you enjoy school. We saw good behaviour in almost every class but a number of you told us that behaviour is not always as good because there are a few who can be silly or inconsiderate. If you are one of those pupils, then you need to think more about how you ought to behave so that everyone feels happy and safe at school.

Most of you are making the progress that is expected and reach the standards expected for your age. We have agreed some ideas with your headteacher and governors for helping you to make faster progress and do even better. We have particularly asked them to look out for ways of involving you more, for example, in seeing what you each want to find out at the start of a new topic. In science, we would like to see you more involved in devising your own investigations, especially those of you who find the science work easy. You listen well to your teachers but not so well to each other. We would like to see you listening more carefully to each other's ideas, and we have asked your teachers to help you with this. You get a lot done in some lessons but, in others, some of you spend so long writing out the date and title that there is barely time for you to do any more work. We have asked staff to 'jog you on' a bit faster so that you get through more in lessons. The 'next step' marking is really helping you to move your work on. We have asked teachers to extend this so that you always get the same clear guidance on how to make your work better in all subjects.

The pupils in the Speech and Language Centre are especially well supported. We would like to see the support stepped up further for those others of you who need extra help with your learning. In particular, we have asked staff and governors to ensure that you and your parents are involved more in identifying your targets.

Some of your parents told us about the improvements they have seen in the Reception Year, but there is still further to go before provision for the Reception children is as good as it should be. We would like to see the indoor and outdoor areas made more interesting and exciting for the children. We would like them helped to learn the school's orderly routines more quickly and to make better use of the time available for playing and learning. We have also asked staff to make sure that they are keeping a careful

check on how well each of the children are doing.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward

Lead inspector

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