

Harmans Water Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130949
Local Authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	341070
Inspection dates	9–10 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Christine Pollitt

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	680
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs P Leon
Headteacher	M Harris
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They saw 30 lessons taught by 21 teachers. Meetings were held with parents and carers, groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school development plan, safeguarding and welfare arrangements, and records of pupils' progress. Inspectors also analysed questionnaires from 100 pupils, 20 staff and 249 parents and carers.

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

- the effectiveness of curriculum planning in meeting the needs of all groups of pupils, especially boys and higher-attainers
- how well pupils are involved in understanding how to improve their work
- the success of strategies to improve teaching and learning in mathematics.

Information about the school

Harmans Water is a large three-form entry school, nearly three times the average size. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, and their needs include behavioural, social and emotional needs and speech and language and communication difficulties. Around 10% of the pupils come from a wide range of minority ethnic groups. The school shares a site with Harmans Water Pre-school and Koosa Kids after-school club, which are run by private contractors, and so not part of this inspection. The school has several awards including Healthy School status and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Rights Respecting School Award.

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 is a good school where all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, make good progress in their academic work and personal development, so that they are well prepared for their future lives. It is vibrant and extremely caring with a very welcoming community spirit. The following comment from a parent is typical of the very positive views received: 'Harmans Water is a happy place to be. Family values, discipline and the chance to really be children contribute to its success.' Pupils feel very safe because they are supported extremely well, especially when they face difficulty in learning or personal matters. They have a keen enthusiasm to learn and very responsible attitudes, behave well and show huge respect for others. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in above-average attendance rates. Pupils leading daily 'Kick Start' activities is one example of the excellent contribution they make to the school and the wider community.

The school's success is firmly based on the determination that each child will succeed, whatever their background or ability level. An example of the commitment to equal opportunities is the school's achievement of the highest level in the Rights Respecting School Award for the way it has unified social and emotional aspects of learning, sustainable development and community cohesion. The inspiring headteacher and his very effective newly formed senior management team have the full support and involvement of staff, governors and pupils in striving to improve the school. Accurate self-evaluation and the identification of actions to improve teaching and learning have increased the pace of learning across the school. Consequently the school has a good capacity to improve further and build on current strengths.

Pupils are doing well because the teaching is good and the curriculum is mostly adapted well to meet their needs. However, some pupils could be doing even better. In a few lessons challenge is limited because there are not enough opportunities for pupils to extend their skills. For example, in some mathematics and science lessons there are too few chances for pupils to engage in problem solving and investigative work. Although teachers assess children's progress regularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, they do not always use this information to match adult support to the specific needs of each child. This means that children's progress is not always as rapid as it could be.

Inspectors observed some outstanding features in English and mathematics lessons. However, the school's monitoring process offers too few opportunities to share this best practice with all teachers. While teachers set pupil targets for English and mathematics in every class, these are not always well understood by pupils. Teachers mark work regularly with positive comments but do not always make clear to pupils what they need to do to improve their work.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good and better teaching to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment by:
 - linking marking more effectively to pupil targets to show pupils the level at which they are working and to identify the next steps in their learning
 - providing more problem-solving and investigative activities for pupils to develop their skills, particularly in mathematics and science
 - ensuring that teachers have regular opportunities to share best practice
 - using assessment information more effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage to match adult support to the specific needs of each child.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children start school in Nursery or Reception classes with skills and understanding typically below those expected of three- or four-year-olds, especially in reading, writing and calculation skills. From these low starting points, children make good progress and by Year 6 lesson observations and work scrutiny show that their attainment is above average in English and broadly average in mathematics. An increasing number of pupils are reaching the higher levels. Attainment in mathematics has risen due to a clear focus on teaching calculation skills. Curriculum initiatives in reading and writing have resulted in raised attainment in English. There are no marked differences in the achievement of different groups of pupils, and the gap between girls' and boys' attainment is closing, and is smaller than typically seen nationally.

During the inspection pupils were very much enjoying their project work. For example, one of the many highlights of the curriculum is the whole-school 'continent' study where staff and pupils alike learn about a different continent of the world each year. As one parent commented on their questionnaire, 'The girls love being immersed in different cultures, and there is always a huge "buzz" around the whole-school parade at the end of the topic.'

Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe, and are very confident in how to keep safe when using new technologies. Incidents of unkind behaviour are rare and pupils respond well to the individual support they are given to deal with their feelings. They are enthusiastic about the rich cultural experiences delivered through the curriculum, such as all Year 3 pupils learning to play an instrument. Pupils are very keen to take on an extensive range of responsibilities as, for example, school council members, Rights Respecting School ambassadors or play monitors.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ 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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Respect and enjoyment of what others have to offer, regardless of their differences, are important at this school. This is apparent in the way pupils and adults work so effectively together in lessons. The best lessons are interactive and filled with lively discussion. Techniques such as 'talk partners' are successfully used to actively involve all pupils during lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally strong and they work hard to make learning interesting. Teachers make effective use of new technologies to provide a stimulus for learning. For example, during the inspection Year 3 were enjoying a Skype interview with the Yorvik museum to learn about the Vikings. In another lesson pupils were enthusiastically taking turns in using the controls to manoeuvre a large bee along a track. Teachers and their assistants give pupils valuable and developmental oral feedback in lessons. They mark work in books regularly, but do not always make clear how well pupils are progressing towards their targets to enable them to better understand how to improve.

The outstanding quality of the school's care is evident in its excellent support for vulnerable pupils, including its provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The progress of these pupils, and those at the early stages of speaking English, is tracked very effectively and they receive clearly targeted support in the classrooms from teachers and a skilled team of teaching assistants. Procedures to support pupils as they move from one year to the next, and especially on to the next school, are thorough and help them progress confidently. Those pupils considered vulnerable receive particularly good support at this time.

Ongoing curriculum review that takes into account the views and interests of learners

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ensures strong provision that supports the good development of pupils' knowledge and skills in each subject. Pupils' enjoyment of their education is greatly enriched through visits and visitors and the wide variety of clubs on offer, including drumming, dance and film.

A comprehensive programme for personal, social and health education, supported by work leading to Healthy School status, gives pupils a good understanding of how to lead safe and healthy lives. Good links with the Koosa Kids after-school club support pupils who receive out-of-school care on the school site.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is outstanding at embedding ambition and driving improvement, and recently included the whole school in developing a new vision and direction. He has developed a strong network of leadership at all levels and a shared commitment to high expectations for pupils' achievement and personal development. Assisted by the support and challenge of the highly effective governing body, they have a clear view of the school's strengths and have put in place effective strategies to address any weaknesses that are identified.

The success of the school's commitment to promoting equal opportunities and eradicating discrimination is evident in the parity in achievement of all groups of pupils. Barriers to learning have been successfully lifted; for example, pupils with behavioural and emotional needs are totally included in all aspects of school life and are achieving in line with their peers. The extremely strong partnerships with parents and carers and the community reflect the school's commitment to the promotion of community cohesion. Effective links with other schools, specialists and agencies ensure that all pupils receive the support they need to make good progress in all aspects of school life. Current action plans include developing links with a diverse range of other schools. Throughout its work the school plans with imagination and high expectations. This planning is based on rigorous self-evaluation and continuous checks on pupils' progress across the school. Challenging targets are set and reviewed regularly and increased as appropriate. The impact of the use of these targets is reflected in the improving trend in achievement and standards. Statutory requirements are met, and governors are rigorous in ensuring that safeguarding for every pupil is of exemplary quality. Staff are vetted in accordance with up-to-the-minute guidance from central government and the local authority. Record

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keeping is exceptionally robust.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Established links with pre-school settings, and useful home visits, help children settle happily into school. They make satisfactory progress but their skills remain below average in most areas of learning when they enter Year 1. Recent teaching initiatives for small group work have been successful in improving children's basic skills in reading and calculations.

Children particularly enjoy the outdoor areas, which are well designed, bright and welcoming with areas for sand, water, large construction toys and vehicles. Planning ensures there is a good balance between play activities and more structured learning led by adults. Consequently the children are keen to learn, and their behaviour is good. They develop confidence and independence in response to the high expectations of the staff. Adults are good at helping children to learn through play, but sometimes miss opportunities to develop children's learning further. For example, children choosing to play independently do not always have enough adult support to extend their learning skills and habits or to discuss how they might improve. Also, there are not enough informal opportunities to learn basic skills, for example in counting and writing.

Pastoral care is excellent, aided by extremely effective links with parents, and includes greeting children and their families at the start of the day. All adults know the children well and regularly assess their progress. However, assessment is not always used as sharply as it should be to adjust provision to match the needs of each child.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

The majority of questionnaire returns were positive in all aspects and indicated a high level of support and confidence in the school. All parents and carers felt that the school helped their children to have a healthy lifestyle. A number of parents and carers made additional comments about the excellent leadership, and the support provided by the teachers and their assistants. A small minority of parents and carers have concerns about how behaviour is managed and the progress their children are making. The inspection found behaviour in and around the school to be good. However, although children generally make good progress, they could do even better and the inspectors have agreed actions with the school to address this issue.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harmans Water 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 249 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 680 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	147	59	97	39	5	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	174	70	74	30	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	140	56	99	40	9	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	135	54	103	41	7	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	155	62	90	36	2	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	141	57	96	39	8	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	137	55	112	45	0	0	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)	123	49	108	43	2	1	2	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	127	51	104	42	6	2	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	141	57	89	36	10	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	113	45	118	47	9	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	173	69	72	29	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	173	69	71	28	4	2	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



11 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harmans Water Primary School, Bracknell, RG12 9NE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed observing your lessons, talking to you and reading your questionnaires. You very much enjoy lessons and, as a result, you make good progress in your learning.

Yours is a good school with some very good features. Here are some of the things we liked best.

- You behave well and work hard.
- You know all about how to keep yourselves very safe, active and healthy.
- All the adults in the school take care of you outstandingly well and make sure that you are very safe.
- They work hard to make sure you have good opportunities to achieve well.

Your headteacher and all the staff are doing a good job and they want to make things even better for you. We have identified four things for teachers to do to improve the way you learn.

- Check your work against your targets to show you the level at which you are working and what you need to do to improve.
- Plan more problem-solving and investigative activities for you to develop your skills, particularly in mathematics and science.
- Give those of you in the Nursery and Reception classes more help with your learning when you have choosing time.
- Make sure that they have enough opportunities to share the best ways of teaching you.

You can help by talking to your teachers about how well you are learning and how you think your lessons could be improved.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Pollitt

Lead inspector

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