

Harborne Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132261
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	341328
Inspection dates	29–30 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Alan Dobbins

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 of pupils on the school roll	625
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Fiona Thrush
Headteacher	Mr Mark Slater
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2006
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by five additional inspectors. The inspectors saw 23 lessons in whole or in part, observed 19 teachers and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils, the school improvement officer and with 14 parents and carers. They looked at data the school holds on pupils and scrutinised 180 parent and carer questionnaires.

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

- how good is the progress of pupils who leave at the end of this year and whether all pupils, including those learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make equivalent progress against their targets
- how well pupils do in their writing
- how effective is the Reception Year in giving children a good start
- how effective is the work of governors and middle managers in supporting the senior leaders drive to improve standards.

Information about the school

Harborne is a large school. About 50% of pupils are from a White British heritage and most of the others are from an Asian heritage. The proportion of pupils learning English as an additional language is higher than average. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of one year only, the Reception Year. Since the last inspection there has been a substantial change of staff, including the senior leaders. The headteacher joined the school in January 2008 and the deputy headteacher and the advanced skills teacher in September 2008.

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

1

Main findings

Harborne is a good and improving school. Some aspects are outstanding. Almost all the parents and carers are extremely happy with the school with one saying: 'I have had four very different children at Harborne, and it has been fantastic for all of them.'

Typically, children join the Reception Year at about the levels expected for their ages in all the areas of early learning except in recognising numbers and in speaking and listening. In these areas they do better than expected. Over the Reception Year, they make outstanding progress in each of the areas of early learning and, in each area, enter Year 1 at levels beyond those expected for their age. In Years 1 to 6 pupils make good progress. When they leave school, they attain at exceptionally high levels, well beyond those expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. The current Year 6 pupils are attaining similarly high standards.

The relatively new team of senior leaders has worked hard and successfully in maintaining the high standards and in eliminating the slow down in pupils' progress in English, especially in writing, they recognised when they joined the school. Their rigorous programme for improving teaching is showing positive results. Overall, teaching is good, but an increasing proportion of lessons formally observed over the last two years have been judged outstanding.

The school is a busy and happy place. The excellent relationships pupils have with staff make the school a welcoming and supportive place where friends are easily made. Pupils thrive as learners and as developing young people because they enjoy school and feel safe and comfortable there. This is easily seen through their good attendance, their outstandingly good behaviour, and in the way in which they routinely work as hard as they can in lessons. They have a secure understanding of right and wrong and what constitutes a healthy lifestyle. Many pupils show the latter by eating healthily and regularly taking part in physical activity offered through the lunchtime and after-school clubs. Pupils are proud of their school and of the way they contribute to making it the stimulating place it is. All groups within the school are fully represented in taking responsibilities. Pupils gain in maturity through taking posts of responsibility such as house captains and by being members of the school council. Some support the day-to-day running of the school by acting as peer mediators and door monitors at break and lunchtimes. They talk confidently about ethical issues and show considerable sensitivity to the cultural traditions and religious beliefs of others in the school.

The team of senior leaders is unified in their ambition to drive improvement, an ambition fully shared by governors. Through effective use of self-evaluation, the leaders know the school's strengths and weakness well. They are aware that to become an outstanding

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school pupils need to make better progress in their learning. They have seen that in the lessons where progress is outstanding pupils take greater responsibility for their learning than is the case in the lessons in which progress is not as good. In other lessons progress is limited because the link between the curriculum and teachers' planning does not focus well enough on the pupils as learners. In these lessons pupils have fewer chances to take ownership of their learning experiences. This acts to restrict the depth of their knowledge and understanding in each subject, and acts against making the curriculum a cohesive learning package where one subject inextricably links with the others. By maintaining the very high standards, through their speedy and successful action to reverse the slowdown in progress in English, and by embedding quickly and effectively many new procedures senior leaders have shown an outstanding capacity to continue to improve the school. The feelings of pupils and the great majority of staff for the school are aptly summed up by one parent who said: 'This is a great school that we are lucky to have in our area.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop and plan the curriculum so that teachers can present more lessons that give pupils regular opportunities to take responsibility for their learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

The outstanding relationships between pupils and their teachers and teaching assistants help make lessons purposeful and enjoyable. The best lessons hurry along. They are characterised by pupils working hard. This is because careful planning in these lessons gives pupils ownership of their learning in a way that requires them to find out for themselves and so gain a deeper understanding of what they are learning. This means that they see the links with prior learning more easily, even when this has occurred in other subjects. However, in other lessons, pupils have too little ownership of their learning. These lessons are planned so that pupils have specific tasks to follow in prescribed ways and have little opportunity to think about their learning in broader terms, for example by applying it outside of their examples or by linking it with learning in the other subjects.

In all the lessons teachers ensure that all pupils do equivalently well against their targets. This is because of the carefully targeted support provided for those who need help in overcoming language difficulties when they are learning English and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The school has the feel of a close and supportive community. Pupils are proud of the many roles they play in the day-to-day running of the school. The strong relationships they have with each other minimise their differences in gender, cultural heritage and religious belief. Their knowledge of the similarities and differences of the cultural and religious traditions seen among the pupils in the school is very good. They talk sensitively about their own and others' experiences and relate these to their own situations in seeing the advantages they have. Through their very good eating choices

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and by taking regular physical activity, pupils show a keen understanding of the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The residential visits are much enjoyed by pupils and make a good contribution to promoting self-confidence and in developing the personal and social skills that they require to be successful at the next stage of their education and in later life. Pupils gain good awareness of the wider world through helping to choose the charities they support and in helping to link the school, through the website and webcam, with a school in Nepal.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

In the most effective lessons, teachers inspire pupils to explore and express their ideas fully in managing their own learning and in making links with prior learning. Pupils are expected to choose how to carry out and record their learning and to present their findings. For example, in a Year 6 lesson they used computers and calculators in a lively and challenging mathematics investigation into the nutritional content of a ready made meal of their choice. In doing so, they gained insight into the most effective ways of applying the basic mathematical procedures, improved their computer skills and at the

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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same time reinforced their understanding of the benefits to a healthy lifestyle of some food types. However, pupils are not so actively involved in learning in all lessons. In some, learning is much less exciting because it is not personalised as much to the learning styles and interests of individual pupils. Too often the focal point is the teacher talking rather than pupils' learning. Especially in the outstanding lessons, teachers regularly find opportunities to check pupils' understanding and, if necessary, guide changes in the lesson by, for example, providing different strategies and ideas to consolidate learning. The system for tracking pupils' progress is used particularly well to recognise those who are not achieving their targets for learning.

The strength of the curriculum is in the way it is broadened and enriched by many additional activities. The opportunities for pupils to learn a musical instrument are exceptional. Links with a local football club provide specialist coaching. The use of specialist facilities not available at the school, and the residential visits, are all fully enjoyed by pupils. There is a weaker element in the curriculum; there are too few planned opportunities that personalise learning so that pupils gain the skills of independent and investigative learning, and use these to apply their knowledge to different contexts according to their interests and learning preferences.

The procedures for securing the care and well-being of pupils are robust and applied rigorously. Pupils are quick to say they are happy at school because they feel safe and secure. The support for pupils learning English as an additional language and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is outstanding. The very high quality of this provision is easily seen in the good progress these pupils make against their targets for learning, which is equivalent to that achieved by the other pupils. One parent whose son has special educational needs commented: 'The special needs coordinator and the other teachers have helped us as much as they possibly can in assisting our child's education.' Pupils identified as gifted and talented gain equivalently high quality enrichment and extension opportunities. The links with families and agencies work outstandingly well in ensuring that all pupils have equal access to all the school offers. One parent wrote: 'A pupil in this school is not a number but is a valuable person.' Inspectors agree with this sentiment.

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 has a clear vision for improving the school to become an exceptional

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place where pupils excel as learners and in developing the skills, attitudes and the confidence to be successful in meeting the challenges of the next stage of their education and later life. In this he is supported by a committed and effective team of senior leaders and an equally committed, and increasingly effective, group of governors. Governors know the school very well and are extremely well organised and thorough in meeting their responsibilities. The expectation is that all staff will operate at the highest of levels and many middle managers are contributing fully to driving improvement through raising standards in their subjects. Newly introduced procedures, including those to do with performance management and the marking of completed work, are bedding in well. Procedures for tracking the progress of pupils and for monitoring the quality of teaching are managed with great rigour. The performance management cycle is contributing well to driving improvement through targeting specific training for staff. Safeguarding procedures are thorough as the school has adopted good practice. Due regard has been paid to community cohesion. Links with the local community are very well established and take good account of different ethnic and religious traditions. The upcoming visit by teachers to broaden the links already established with a school in Nepal is aimed at further extending the range of international connections. Vulnerable pupils are supported outstandingly well. There is no discrimination of any sort. The great majority of parents and carers feel very well informed about their children's achievement, well-being and development. They feel encouraged to contribute what they can to the school. Systems for giving parents and carers information about the school work very effectively, with an increasing number of parents and carers gaining information through the school's website.

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	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Even though many have not experienced formal nursery education, children settle quickly and very well because they soon learn that the Reception area is a place where they are safe and secure. They behave outstandingly well and enjoy taking a full part in all of their activities.

The outstanding leadership and management are seen in many ways, including in the high expectations for staff in fulfilling their duties as teachers and teaching assistants. Planning for learning is personalised to children's interests and capabilities, and solidly based on detailed and accurate record keeping. Consequently, children are most often engaged in activities which interest them and are right for them. Those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language benefit from prompt and very effective additional support. Careful planning minimises the potential disadvantages of the small size and traditional shape of the classrooms. Transition arrangements into Year 1 operate very smoothly. The outstanding progress children make in their Reception Year ensure that they are very well prepared for the challenges of Year 1.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who spoke with inspectors or who responded to the questionnaire say they like the school very much because their children enjoy being there. They are appreciative of the good teaching and the way the school is led and managed. They like the way in which their children are being prepared for their futures, including learning about the importance of a healthy lifestyle. A very small minority feel that the school does not keep them well enough informed of the progress their children are making. Inspectors looked closely at this. They judged that the many procedures to provide information on events at school, through the website and at formal termly meetings, provide sufficient chances for parents and carers to gain specific knowledge on how well their children are doing both as individuals and collectively in comparison with other schools. A few parents and carers are concerned about the way in which the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judge that, when required, the procedures for improving the behaviour of individual pupils work well. The result of this

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is seen day-to-day as pupils' outstanding behaviour contributes to the school being a calm and well-ordered place.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harborne 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 180 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 625 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	125	69	49	27	3	2	2	1
The school keeps my child safe	113	63	59	33	6	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	64	36	101	56	9	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	87	48	83	46	8	4	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	106	59	70	39	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	82	46	88	49	6	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	38	104	58	5	3	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)	63	35	86	48	5	3	3	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	83	46	83	46	8	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	71	39	96	53	8	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	58	32	106	59	4	2	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	98	54	76	42	3	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	113	63	60	33	5	3	1	1

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"> ■ 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.



31 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harborne Primary School, Birmingham, B17 9LU

It was lovely for me and my colleagues to meet and spend time with you when we inspected your school. Thank you for making us so welcome. We found your school to be a good school, but with some aspects being outstanding. We especially liked:

- the very high levels you attain in English, mathematics and science
- the good progress you make in your learning and your outstanding progress in becoming mature and responsible in readiness for the challenges of your next school
- that you feel proud to be a member of the school, your excellent behaviour and the way you get on so well with each other
- that you are safe and comfortable at school and cared for very well indeed
- that you know the importance of a healthy lifestyle and that most of you make healthy choices most of the time
- the way in which your headteacher and the other senior leaders provide you with what you need to help you in your learning and in growing up.

There is one thing we have asked the school to do to make it an even better school. We would like your senior leaders to look at the curriculum so that it becomes better at helping teachers plan more lessons that give you opportunities to find out things for yourselves. We believe that this will help you to reach the very highest of standards in your learning. Of course, you can help too by always behaving as well as you did over the time of our visit and by continuing to work hard all the time.

Yours sincerely

Alan Dobbins

Lead inspector

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