

Harrowgate Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135088
Local Authority	Darlington
Inspection number	341615
Inspection dates	14–15 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Susan Waugh

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	566
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Alison Maddison
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Morgan/Mrs Carole Hancocks
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 20 lessons and observed 19 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at its improvement plan, data on pupils' progress, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, and a range of school policies including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils. They also analysed 110 questionnaires received from parents and carers, and 97 from pupils.

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

- pupils' attainment and progress in science
- the rate of pupils' progress in Key Stage 2
- how effectively teachers use assessment to improve pupils' learning
- how well leaders and managers accurately identify and tackle areas for improvement.

Information about the school

This primary school is larger than average. It serves children from a predominantly White British heritage. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The co-headteachers took up post three years ago and a number of new staff have joined the school since then. The school holds a number awards, including the Activemark and Green Flag Eco-Schools status.

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. Teachers' good relationships with pupils and the calm atmosphere coupled with meticulous and detailed organisation ensure that pupils receive excellent care, guidance and support. This and their outstanding behaviour makes pupils feel extremely safe and secure. The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school so that attendance is above average.

Children make good progress throughout their time in school and by the end of Year 6, their attainment is broadly average. This success is due to the consistently good teaching. Work is well matched to pupils' abilities and provides them with the right level of challenge. Marking of work is not as strong because it is not always tailored to meet individuals' needs: children are given insufficient opportunity to respond to the comments made. Children know what their targets for improvement are but do not always understand them. Therefore, they are not clear about what they need to do next to improve. The school carefully ensures that the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are met. This group receives individual support matched well to their needs. As a result, they make good progress throughout the school.

Leaders and managers know the school's strengths and areas of weakness well. The co-headteachers have implemented new and wide-ranging structures and systems which provide the basis for the school's improvements. The leaders of learning in each phase in the school together with the governing body support the drive for improvement well. As a result, the school has a good capacity to improve further. Central to recent improvements is rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching to help staff improve the pace of pupils' learning. However, the high volume of data collected has been used to respond to all areas of weakness equally so that some issues have not been fully tackled. The curriculum, for example, provides variety and interest but does not sufficiently support pupils in being independent and active learners.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment by developing children's understanding of what they need to do to improve further by:
 - ensuring marking is tailored to individual pupils' needs and that time is given for children to respond to and understand the teachers' comments
 - making pupils' targets for improvement easily understood so that they are clear about their next steps in learning

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- providing pupils with the opportunity to mark each other's work so that they gain a deeper understanding of what has been learned and what needs to be learned next.
- Refine systems for monitoring, evaluation and development planning so that:
 - data are analysed more effectively to inform the few key priorities which will have the most impact on pupils' learning
 - plans are detailed, relevant, measurable and have clear timescales.
- Make the curriculum more relevant and practical by:
 - involving children in its development and design
 - including plentiful opportunities for pupils to be creative, active and independent learners.

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

Pupils' positive attitudes to learning mean that they achieve well. In lessons they listen carefully, respond to the tasks they are set and make good progress. The skilled support pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities receive ensures that they, too, make good progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 6, standards in 2009 were above average in English and mathematics, although below average in science. Provisional data for 2010 coupled with scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that, although standards are broadly average overall, they continue to be above average in reading and have risen in science since 2009. Attainment at the end of each key stage fluctuates being dependent to some extent on differing levels on entry and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Importantly, the work seen by inspectors in lessons confirms an overall picture of good progress throughout the school.

Pupils, parents and carers agree that the school keeps pupils safe. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe because of the opportunities they have to learn and understand about a range of safety issues. Children know how to stay healthy and they enjoy the wide range of sporting opportunities provided. Pupils have an increasing range of opportunities to meet with people from different backgrounds such as through the link made with a small rural school. Spiritual development is satisfactory rather than good because the curriculum does not fully promote creativity and imagination. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and the local community. They value their responsibilities and participate in a range of local events such as Holocaust Memorial Day. Pupils' good social skills, their positive attitudes, effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) and their regular opportunities to meet and work with adults from the locality prepare them well for their future lives.

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

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good because all staff plan and organise lessons clearly. They match work to individual needs and this, along with good questioning, provides the right level of challenge to help pupils make good progress. Interactive displays are used well to help children as they work and to engage them in the lesson. The support of other adults is targeted well and pupils' learning generally moves on at a good pace. Misunderstandings are corrected in lessons when they arise but marking and targets are too often expressed in language which is difficult for children to understand so the impact can be lost.

The curriculum is organised well and based on a range of themes which provides opportunities for children to practise and consolidate their basic skills. It does not yet fully promote children's opportunities to be active and independent learners or make full use of resources such as the Forest Garden which makes learning exciting and relevant. Pupils' well-being is strongly supported through the use of visitors and community facilities. Visits, such as that to an outdoor activity centre support pupils' personal development. The curriculum is carefully adapted to meet the needs of groups of pupils and to address any weakness. For example, extra teaching at the beginning of the school day helps pupils who may fall behind in aspects of their learning. There is a wide range of enrichment opportunities for children of all ages. Music provision is particularly good.

Support for the children whose circumstances have made them most vulnerable and their families is excellent because of the work with support agencies and thorough monitoring of their progress and well-being. The advice and guidance from other

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agencies are fully utilised in the classroom to support pupils. Close links with the local secondary school, and commitment from leaders and managers ensure that transition is highly successful. An innovative project to support transition is currently underway and appreciated by pupils. Procedures to support attendance are excellent, including discouraging the taking of holidays in school time and the school does all it can to improve the attendance of the very few pupils with above average absence. Systems and procedures to maintain the safety of pupils are meticulous and ensure that pupils are confident of their own safety.

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?

Central to recent improvements within the school has been the drive of the co-headteachers who are ably supported by phase leaders. The phase leaders take an increasingly greater responsibility for monitoring and evaluating standards and for supporting staff to improve their teaching. Although still relatively inexperienced in their role, this group of middle managers has demonstrated its impact in, for example, maintaining the quality of teaching in their phase during staff absence and identifying and beginning to tackle areas of weakness. A wealth of data is collected and leaders have tried to respond to all weaknesses equally. This has resulted in plans which are not precisely enough focused and which sometimes lack depth in tackling issues.

Governors make a good contribution to the work of the school. They check the performance of the school regularly to provide appropriate challenge. Procedures to safeguard children are good, being characterised by highly effective systems which are very regularly checked. There is a good commitment to promoting community cohesion and the school knows its own community well. Leaders and managers are committed to engaging parents and carers effectively and, although good procedures are in place, the school knows that there is more to be done. The fact that all pupils are valued, given the same opportunities and all achieve well illustrates the school's commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2

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	
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	2
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	2
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

The present Reception Year is a generally higher attaining group of children. Most children start Nursery with the skills expected for children of their age and make good progress. As a result, children in the present Reception Year are overall attaining above that typical for their age by the time they join Year 1. Children make good progress because provision is good. They have access to a wide variety of stimulating activities, indoors and outdoors, and staff support them well to play and learn together. Each pupil has a key worker who ensures that pupils settle well and develop confidence to take advantage of the opportunities offered to them. Staff carefully collect a range of information about children, observing them as they learn and play but that information is not always used as effectively as it could be to identify the next steps in learning.

Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Planning is extremely detailed and good organisation ensures that children settle quickly into their new routines. Very effective welfare arrangements underpin the way that staff work well together to ensure that children's safety is paramount at all times.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

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Almost one fifth of parents and carers returned the inspection questionnaire. Of those, most are happy with their child's experience at the school. Almost all believe their child is kept safe and most say their child enjoys school. The inspection team agree. A small minority feel that their suggestions and concerns are not taken account of and a few believe that the school is not well led and managed. During the inspection the inspectors found no evidence to support the view of this small minority.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Harrowgate Hill 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 110 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 566 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	45	55	50	4	4	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	61	55	46	42	3	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	49	45	54	49	6	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	43	56	51	7	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	50	48	44	7	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	37	59	54	9	8	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	35	64	58	6	5	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)	40	36	55	50	9	8	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	47	43	50	45	12	11	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	42	51	46	12	11	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	35	46	42	17	15	7	6
The school is led and managed effectively	41	37	48	44	10	9	10	9
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	44	48	44	12	11	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

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.



16 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harrowgate Hill Primary School, Darlington DL3 0HZ

Thank you all for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and we agree with you that Harrowgate Hill is a good school which provides you with a good quality of education. Here are some of the good things we found out about your school:

- you make good progress in your lessons because teaching is good
- adults in school take excellent care of you and you told us that you feel very safe and enjoy school
- your behaviour is excellent and you follow school rules really well
- you have good opportunities to practise your sporting and musical skills, to meet a range of interesting people and visit interesting places.

Even in good schools, there are ways of improving. We have asked the school to help you better understand the marking in your books and your targets. We would also like you to be more active in lessons so they become more exciting and interesting and you are involved in deciding what to learn. We have also asked the school's leaders and managers to think carefully about what they want to improve next so that it makes the biggest difference to the progress you make in class.

You can help by continuing to work as hard as you can and thinking about what you really what to learn and are interested in. Thank you for helping with this inspection.

I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Susan Waugh

Lead inspector

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