

Harwell Primary School

The Styles, Harwell, Didcot, Oxfordshire OX11 0LH

Inspection dates

23–24 May 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher provides the school with strong and effective leadership. He is ably assisted by leaders at all levels, who ensure that the quality of education continuously improves.
- Leaders and governors have a shared ambition that all pupils receive a high-quality education. They focus relentlessly on raising the achievement of pupils.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now good. Pupils are making at least good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils read widely and often. Most pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make rapid progress in reading from their starting points.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported effectively. Skilled staff ensure that this group of pupils achieves well.
- Children in the early years make rapid progress. Carefully planned experiences reflect their interests and engage children in learning. Teachers' assessments are thorough and ensure that activities meet children's needs well.
- Pupils behave and cooperate with each other well. This reflects the school's strong values and the inclusive ethos that underpins pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders' strategic planning is sharp and includes specific targets to evaluate progress against. Their plans, and focused actions, have secured rapid school improvement.
- Governors know the school well and have a precise view of its effectiveness. They have robustly challenged leaders about the use and impact of pupil premium funding on teaching, and outcomes for pupils.
- Occasionally, staff do not intervene to help pupils when they do not understand or get something wrong. As a result, weaknesses remain in some aspects of pupils' learning.
- Teachers do not always demand enough from the pupils, especially in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. This means that some pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve the quality of teaching so that pupils make the best possible progress by ensuring that teachers:
 - consistently set work with the right level of challenge across the curriculum
 - identify and address pupils' misunderstandings so that learning is rapid.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership for the school. Since the previous inspection, he and his senior leadership team have ensured that the quality of teaching and learning has improved rapidly. Consequently, pupils are making good progress as they move through the school.
- Leaders have developed a collaborative and ambitious team spirit throughout the school. They place strong emphasis on all staff being reflective. This is evident in the effective systems in place to evaluate the performance of staff. Leaders hold teachers to account successfully for pupils' achievement because they set carefully thought through targets to measure performance.
- Middle leaders are keen to support their colleagues to get the best out of pupils. Some middle leaders are new to their whole-school responsibility, but all have the skills and knowledge they need to effectively evaluate and influence the work of other teachers.
- Senior leaders ensure that funding for pupils who are disadvantaged is used well to meet pupils' needs. There is evidence that well-targeted actions, such as the pastoral support for vulnerable pupils, are leading to good outcomes. Well-planned interventions are regularly evaluated to ensure that they continue to have a positive impact.
- The leader responsible for the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective in overseeing pupils' progress and evaluating the impact of the extra support they receive. This ensures that the provision is, as intended, making a difference and enabling the pupils to learn well.
- The school supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils demonstrate their awareness of a wide range of moral issues. They understand everyone's right to be able to freely express their opinion, and be listened to.
- The broad and balanced curriculum is planned carefully and topics engage and interest pupils. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well. They have good opportunities to learn about other cultures, for example during their learning about Japan.
- Leaders effectively promote pupils' understanding of fundamental British values, such as the rule of law, democracy and tolerance. For example, pupils represented different 'parties' in the run up to the school's 'election' on the 8 June. Manifestos were robustly debated. For example, one pupil said, 'I'd like to come back to you on how you will fund your pledge.'
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is used effectively. It has increased pupils' participation in sport. The school now provides a much wider range of sporting opportunities and inter-school competitions. Dedicated sports coaches organise successful lunchtime and after-school sports activities. For example, yoga has been introduced to enhance pupils' health and emotional well-being.
- School leaders have effective links with the local authority and a network of local schools. Termly meetings with the local authority have provided effective support in monitoring and challenging the school, so that pupils' outcomes have improved. The

local authority has also brokered extra support for leaders from the headteacher of another local school.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed and ambitious for their school. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths. Governors understand that the school can improve further. They use information gathered through their own visits to school, as well as through the reports provided by leaders, to ask challenging questions to strengthen teaching and learning. Governors check the spending of the pupil premium, the PE and sport premium and specific funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to ensure that it is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Governors are particularly rigorous in keeping up to date with the progress of pupils who come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Safeguarding

- Staff know pupils very well. They ensure that all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them more vulnerable, are provided with effective support and guidance. Members of the governing body bring a raft of skills to the leadership of the school, including safeguarding. Regular visits to the school from link governors ensure that safeguarding and health and safety procedures are robust and fit for purpose. Procedures for vetting new employees and volunteers are comprehensive. Training for all staff is thorough and covers recent government guidelines, including identifying when pupils may be at risk of harm from female genital mutilation or extremism. Staff have a good understanding of how to raise concerns about pupils using the school's clear internal system. Leaders work closely with external agencies and parents to ensure pupils' safety. Pupils attend regularly and feel safe in school. They say their teachers care and look after them well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Weaknesses identified at that time have been largely eliminated. Purposeful learning environments, coupled with carefully considered strategies for developing pupils' skills, ensure that pupils' learning is consistently good. For example, 'story maps', evident in every classroom, support pupils in knowing how to create suspense and structure their writing effectively.
- Adults and pupils enjoy positive relationships. This is a strength that is seen throughout the school. As a result, pupils' attitudes to learning are very strong. Pupils love learning and happily talk about what they are doing. They help each other during lessons, without being prompted by an adult.
- Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the progress that pupils make because they are well trained and deployed effectively. If they spot pupils who are struggling or losing concentration, they skilfully intervene to bring them back on track.
- Teachers are held highly accountable for the progress of every pupil in their class. While teaching assistants may deliver small-group and individual programmes for

pupils, teachers have the responsibility for checking that pupils are helped appropriately to make rapid progress. Teachers prepare updated information on every pupil's learning to share with senior leaders at regular progress meetings.

- The school's approach to teaching mathematics develops pupils' ability to reason and explain their strategies. However, there are times when some pupils have not grasped concepts in mathematics quickly. Staff do not unpick the misconceptions of some pupils quickly enough, or allow sufficient time for concepts to be fully explored. In these instances, the progress of some pupils is limited.
- The effective teaching of phonics has ensured that pupils can build words effectively and understand what they are reading well. Pupils took pride in demonstrating their reading skills to the inspectors and showed that they understood the text well. Texts for the most able readers are often particularly demanding. Pupils enjoy reading a lot. For example, one pupil said, 'I just get carried away when I read.'
- Teachers have successfully challenged pupils to produce a higher standard of written work compared to standards at the time of the previous inspection. In English, pupils demonstrate their ability to write well for a range of purposes and different audiences. Pupils write at length and their work is carefully presented. However, this high standard of writing in English is not always evident in pupils' writing for other subjects.
- In some lessons, teachers do not always challenge pupils to excel. This happens when teachers' expectations of what pupils can do are not high enough. On these occasions, some pupils make slower progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are clearly proud of their school and wish to share their experience with other people. For example, one pupil commented, 'I enjoy coming to school, teachers help us to learn all the time.'
- Pupils are highly motivated learners. They talk confidently about how to improve their work. Staff and pupils have developed strong and respectful relationships. As a result, pupils respond positively in class to any adult intervention. One parent, typical of many, said: 'Harwell School is a wonderful school where my daughter thrives and has developed into a confident, articulate, enthusiastic learner.'
- Pupils say they feel safe and secure in classrooms, as they move around the school, and outside. Pupils know that any inappropriate behaviour will be dealt with promptly. This ensures that they are able to concentrate on their learning. Pupils are confident and keen to do their best in lessons. They also like to help and carry out such duties as 'play leader', responsibly helping younger pupils to feel confident in the playground.
- Pupils of all ages have a good understanding of what bullying is. The youngest pupils know the difference between someone being 'mean', and behaviour that includes persistent, deliberate unkindness. Older pupils talk about cyber bullying confidently, understanding its seriousness. They also recognise the necessity to report online

abuse. Discussions with pupils, and scrutiny of incident records, provided evidence that bullying is rare.

- Staff support pupils' individual needs and emotional well-being sensitively. Vulnerable pupils and those new to the school are particularly well supported.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite, courteous and have good manners. They are respectful of each other and adults. Pupils display a strong sense of pride in their learning, the school and the wider community. As one parent commented: 'It is not just a place for academic education, but the school community fully integrates into the fabric of the village, and parents and families are very involved.'
- The school's system for behaviour management is successful. Staff promote positive behaviour consistently. Pupils know what is expected of them and talk about these expectations in considerable detail. As a result, behaviour logs show a reduction in incidents.
- A strong programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is firmly rooted in all the school's work. Through assemblies, lessons and extra-curricular activities, pupils receive a consistent and regular message about what is right and wrong, and how to develop positive and helpful personal skills and attributes.
- Pupils' attendance has improved and is currently in line with the national average. Evidence shows that where staff have worked with parents, the attendance of pupils has improved. Leaders have a coherent and successful strategy, connected with the use of pupil premium funding, to address attendance issues and improve the achievement of individual pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' outcomes have improved markedly since the previous inspection. This is as a result of good teaching and the effective leadership of governors and the new headteacher.
- By the time they sat national tests in 2016, Year 6 pupils had made above-average progress in mathematics and writing, and secure progress in reading. The proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics was slightly below that of other pupils nationally but this represents good progress from their starting points. Year 6 pupils leave the school well prepared for their secondary education.
- Current pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, often from lower starting points on entry than are typical for their ages. Usually, pupils leave at the end of Year 6 with attainment that is average.
- The difference in performance between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally, with the same starting points, is diminishing in all year groups in response to the very effective programme of support.
- Outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are good. Leaders track pupils' progress and provide high-quality support to ensure that their

needs are met. Parents are involved in supporting the school's work to make sure that their children make good progress.

- The most able pupils make as much progress from their starting points as other pupils. This is because the expectations of these pupils are generally high. Staff manage the level of challenge for most-able pupils in a number of ways, including by setting them additional tasks.
- Leaders, managers and teachers recognise that there is still work to be done to improve pupils' writing further by increasing the level of challenge. Variability remains in the progress of some pupils because pupils do not practise and develop their writing skills in different contexts across the curriculum.
- Occasionally, tasks set by teachers are not pitched at the right level to challenge pupils of different abilities. Sometimes, teachers set tasks that do not provide the opportunity to apply new concepts and ideas. At times, questions are not challenging enough. Consequently, some pupils do not make as much progress as they could.

Early years provision

Good

- Children enter the early years with skills below what is typical for their age. By the end of the Reception Year, children have made good progress from their starting points across all areas of learning. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development has increased year on year. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education in Year 1.
- Disadvantaged children are progressing quickly because leaders use the specific pupil premium funding effectively by providing additional teaching and assistance. This group of children have carefully tailored support programmes designed to meet their specific individual needs. They are now attaining higher standards than previously and there is little difference between the progress and attainment of disadvantaged children and other children nationally.
- The early years team is well supported by senior leaders. They have ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently good. Staff benefit from high-quality professional development focused on the needs of specific children. As a result, children have made good progress in areas of learning where they had previously struggled.
- The learning environment, both indoors and outdoors, is safe, well supervised and provides a range of interesting activities for children. Relationships between staff and children are warm. As a consequence, children settle quickly, are happy and keen to enjoy their time in the setting. Children's reading, writing and mathematical skills are developing well because there are ample opportunities for them to practise them through purposeful play.
- Staff foster close communication with parents. Parents receive a warm welcome when they bring their children to school, and when they collect them. Parents who spoke to inspectors about their children's experiences in the early years were highly positive about the work of staff, their caring approach, and their help in settling children quickly. One parent said, 'I cannot praise them enough.'
- Teachers and teaching assistants use thorough, ongoing assessment to plan targeted and structured opportunities to develop children's skills, particularly in language

development. Teachers use careful questioning to get children thinking and to deepen their understanding.

- Phonics teaching is good. Close monitoring by staff ensure that children are appropriately challenged and that there are opportunities to embed their learning through play. Children move on to the next steps in developing their early reading skills when they are ready.
- Leaders have established comprehensive systems to monitor, review and refine the quality of teaching and learning in the early years. Training needs of all staff are met through carefully planned professional development opportunities. These opportunities contribute to children's outcomes well.

School details

Unique reference number	123062
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10032866

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Waters
Headteacher	Bryn Gibson
Telephone number	01235 835337
Website	www.harwellprimaryschool.co.uk
Email address	head.2563@harwell.oxon.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 April 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Most pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported through the pupil premium funding is also average.
- There have been staff changes since the previous inspection. About a third of the teaching staff began working at the school after the last inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classrooms. Some observations were undertaken with the headteacher.
- Inspectors met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority school improvement service.
- Meetings were held with pupils from the school council and inspectors spoke informally with other pupils to discuss their learning and views on the school.
- School leaders met with inspectors to discuss their roles and the impact of their work.
- Inspectors heard pupils read, and talked to pupils in lessons about the quality of their work.
- Inspectors examined a range of the school's documents, including: information on pupils' progress; improvement plans; curriculum plans; and checks on the quality of teaching. They also examined the school's records relating to safety and behaviour.
- Inspectors scrutinised work in pupils' books across a range of subjects.
- Inspectors took account of the 36 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and information gathered from discussions with parents during the inspection. Inspectors also considered 11 responses to the staff survey and 26 responses to the online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Richard Blackmore, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Justin Bartlett	Ofsted Inspector

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Manchester
M1 2WD

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