

Harlands Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125938
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	315364
Inspection dates	30 April - 1 May 2008
Reporting inspector	David Collard

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 on roll	419
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sandie Sansom
Headteacher	Helen Thorne
Date of previous school inspection	14-17 June 2004
School address	Penland Road Haywards Heath West Sussex RH16 1PJ
Telephone number	01444 450782
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Harlands is a larger than average school serving the local community on the outskirts of the town. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower than the norm and, while many of them are bilingual, virtually all speak English fluently. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below that found nationally.

The school has recently been subjected to a major and highly disruptive building programme but this has considerably extended the facilities. The school has gained many awards, including Investors in Health, Healthy Schools status, a second green flag as an ECO school, Autistic Awareness award, a bronze award Developmental Co-ordination Disorder, the NACE IT mark and Travel Mark 2. It has also been designated a Dyslexia Friendly school.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. The strong determination of the headteacher, along with the shared support of the whole community, has brought the school through a most difficult period of building works. Throughout this, however, the whole school team has ensured it has not lost sight of its primary goal of making sure pupils achieve high standards. As one staff member noted, 'We have been through turmoil but that is all behind us now.' The school rightly, is focusing on refining its systems and procedures to ensure that all groups of pupils reach their highest potential.

Pupils enter the school with generally above average standards compared to those expected for their age. The excellent provision in the Foundation Stage gets them off to a flying start. Throughout Years 1 to 6, pupils make good progress and reach well above average standards by the time they leave. Virtually all pupils achieve the age-expected levels in national tests with a significant proportion doing better than this. This is only part of the story, though. The excellent partnership with other institutions, companies, the town council and outside agencies ensures that pupils receive a balanced and wide-ranging programme of activities that develops both their personal and academic skills. This is encouraging them to become increasingly independent and to become involved in decision-making processes. For example, pupils have been instrumental in pushing forward ecological awareness and, after discussions with the local council, are aiming to make their town the first plastic bag-free zone. They have also helped design and fit out areas within the school. It is no surprise, therefore, that their contribution to the community and understanding of healthy lifestyles is excellent.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and behaviour in lessons is excellent. They are lively, articulate and take a very active interest in all that is asked of them. On just a few occasions, particularly when not directly supervised, this exuberance spills over into over-boisterousness behaviour and some minor lack of respect for others. Nevertheless, pastoral support is very strong. Pupils are polite when talking to adults and are very proud of their school. This is demonstrated in the above average attendance levels and in the care that is taken to ensure that all views are heard and considered.

Lessons are planned carefully and teachers use many varied methods to motivate and stimulate pupils' learning. As one parent said, 'My daughter responds well to the topic-based approach which always seems to capture her imagination.' Good use is made of assistants who provide consistent and well considered support, particularly for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are ever-increasing opportunities for those who show a particular gift or talent to undertake 'master classes' using the expertise within the local cluster of schools. There has been a concerted effort to ensure consistency of approach within each class through a rigorous programme of monitoring. This has helped ensure that as many pupils as possible reach the expected levels for their age. Those at the higher end of the ability range are also achieving well and reach above average standards. However, the school has rightly identified that this now needs refining to ensure that this high level of progress stretches all the pupils who show they are potentially capable of reaching above average standards, particularly at the top end of the middle ability range.

The experience and strong lead provided by the headteacher has been pivotal in developing the expertise of all other leaders through a devolved system of management. The good self-evaluation has led to a highly comprehensive programme of monitoring and scrutiny which involves all staff. There has been especially good support from senior leaders and from within the governing body. This has ensured that the quality of teaching, the accommodation and overall provision has improved. It has been particularly effective in improving the Foundation Stage provision over the last few years. All this demonstrates that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Good arrangements for introducing children to school, together with clear routines and good teamwork, ensure that they become confident and settle quickly and happily. Parents have a high regard for the provision. They praise the 'excellent start to their children's schooling'. Children make excellent progress in all the areas of learning. Many of the present Reception group are on target to attain well above the expected levels on entry to Year 1, although this has fluctuated in previous years. Children are keen to be involved in their activities, their relationships with each other are excellent, and their behaviour enables them to enjoy their learning. The excellent teaching and curriculum meet their needs very well. The exceptional provision for language development means that children listen very carefully and are competent speakers and writers. The outstanding leadership shows in the way that staff work closely together and are constantly evaluating their provision. Accommodation and resources in the Foundation Stage are excellent and provide a wealth of opportunities for children to discover things for themselves. It is a rich and stimulating place for children to learn.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement for those who might be capable of reaching higher levels by identifying the specific needs of this group and developing more open-ended tasks that challenge their potential.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well throughout the school because of the consistently good teaching they receive. Attainment is above the age-expected levels by the start of Year 1 and again by the end of Year 2. Here, standards in writing are particularly good because this is where the school has placed a major focus. By Year 6, pupils are reaching well above average standards and exceptionally high standards in science. This is due to the many practical and investigative opportunities that make pupils think hard. Achievement in mathematics is not as consistently high because more pupils could be reaching the higher levels as they move through the school. School assessments, along with the work in pupils' books, show there is also good achievement through a range of other subjects. These include information and communication technology (ICT), music and art. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those

with confirmed higher ability all make good progress. There is a small group of pupils at the top end of the middle ability range who the school is rightly targeting as some of them are quite capable of achieving the higher Level 5 by the time they leave the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils come into school in the morning with very positive attitudes and good relationships with each other. They say how much they enjoy school. As one pupil said, 'We do great animation on the computers and love things like tag rugby.' Pupils think deeply about their world and care passionately about the environment. One parent particularly commented on how the 'school teaches different religions and about our multicultural society'. Pupils work well in groups, and even the very youngest children enjoy sharing ideas with each other. They are keen to be independent, taking on responsibilities such as 'timetable helper'. They have inspired the local community to develop safety around the school. Behaviour in class is exemplary but a few individuals show a lack of consideration when playing outside. Nevertheless, pupils feel safe in school and think that any incidences of bullying are dealt with fairly. They participate very enthusiastically in wide-ranging physical activities, both in school, during break times and in many after-school clubs. Pupils develop good personal qualities, enabling them to contribute highly effectively. Pupils are keen to give support to each other and enjoy the many responsibilities, such as 'Buddy Reading'. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives, with above average achievement in all subjects, and good development of confidence and independence.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school has a rigorous programme to monitor teaching that has made sure that in each class, pupils make continuous progress. As a result, there are some notable common strengths. The strong management of pupils is ensuring there are very good relationships across the whole school community and no unseemly behaviour in lessons. Cross-subject and class planning is aimed at motivating pupils to find out more and there are many opportunities to undertake practical, investigative and experimental work. These, added to the good use of resources and teaching assistants, ensure that all pupils learn well. Marking, under the newly introduced policy, is helpful and directs future possibilities for learning. Pupils know their targets and in discussion knew what they had to do next to improve. On just a few occasions, the work is too limiting and does not give all pupils the opportunity to undertake open-ended tasks that would stretch their understanding. This does not happen in the Foundation Stage because daily assessment helps very effectively to direct the work that will happen next. Consequently, this is where pupils make the best progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The well planned curriculum makes learning interesting for pupils, who say how much they enjoy the way teachers link subjects such as ICT, history and geography together. This helps them produce exciting projects such as the one about 'The Green World', where they explored environmental issues in great detail. The good provision for pupils who find learning difficult explains why they make rapid progress, especially in their reading and number skills. The school rightly is focusing on extending learning opportunities for a small group of more able pupils in its planning, because they do not always have sufficient opportunities to tackle open-ended tasks to make the best of their skills. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of popular activities throughout the day and after school and excellent provision for sport. There is good provision for gifted and talented pupils to develop their abilities further, particularly in the 'master classes' for mathematics, art and design, and film making at the local secondary school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care is a significant strength of the school and is much appreciated by parents. One parent commented that 'The school takes great care to ensure that children feel valued and that their voice is heard.' This is demonstrated by the high level of commitment by all staff for the robust procedures to promote pupils' health and safety. Teachers are very good at involving pupils in evaluating their own performance, which gives pupils a clear idea of how well they are doing. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early, and teachers introduce effective programmes to meet their needs. The school has good systems to measure pupils' progress but does not always use this information robustly enough to identify all groups of pupils who may be capable of doing better. There is good provision for pupils with emotional difficulties that helps them to cope with their problems. As one parent said, 'The teacher has tailored their teaching to my child's needs and enabled him to achieve well, be highly motivated and develop strengths and confidence in many areas.'

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Highly effective leadership and management are key to the school's success. The headteacher's high expectations of pupils, staff and herself encourage all members of the school to strive hard to succeed. The headteacher is supported very well by a wide range of staff with management responsibilities who share her vision and enthusiasm. Less experienced members of staff benefit from exceptional support to enable them to develop their leadership and management skills and they make valuable contributions to school improvement. The leaders make good use of data on pupils' progress to evaluate the effectiveness of the school and decide upon the main priorities to raise standards further. In 2006, this process identified writing in Key Stage 2 as an area for improvement and, while the school put in place many strategies that have led to some improvement in standards, overall, they remain

lower than other subjects. This is because the action taken by the school is focused on raising standards generally rather than focusing on the specific groups of pupils who are underperforming. Governors are critical, supportive and have a thorough grasp of what needs to be done to raise standards. The leaders have excellent links with other schools that provide valuable opportunities to share facilities, training and expertise.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

3 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harlands Primary School, Haywards Heath RH16 1PJ

Thank you for looking after us so well during our recent visit. We thoroughly enjoyed meeting so many of you and having such interesting discussions. We know you will not be surprised to hear that we think yours is a good school. In fact, there are also some outstanding elements that we have noted in our report, the main points of which are listed below.

- You told us that you think you are taught well. We agree. We have said how many interesting and exciting activities there are for you to do. Consequently, you achieve well and reach well above average standards by the time you leave in Year 6.
- The youngest children get off to a really great start in the Reception classes. The many changes that have been made here over the last couple of years have made a real difference.
- You are clearly very proud of your school and enjoy all that is offered to you. The adults said how well you had coped with the recent upheavals during the building project. Your work to make things safe for everybody and your trips to the council all show how outstandingly well you understand about being healthy. Well done!
- We could see how well you behaved in lessons and got on exceptionally well with each other. Some of you said that you are trying to help make sure that the playground is just as good. We noted that on just a few occasions your excitement ran away with some of you a little bit so you will need to make sure you work on this.
- Your headteacher and all her staff are working hard to make sure you get the best possible start to your education. This includes trying to get even more of you up to the higher Level 5 by the time you leave – so expect to do even more thinking in the future!

Finally, we would like to wish you all the best for the future. Make sure that you think hard about how to continue to make things better at your school so that it continues to work towards being one of the best.

Best wishes
Yours sincerely

David Collard
Lead inspector