

Harton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	136178
Local authority	South Tyneside
Inspection number	382038
Inspection dates	28–29 February 2012
Lead inspector	Kate Pringle

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	675
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Reay
Headteacher	Alison Chipchase
Date of previous school inspection	None
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Age group	3–11
Inspection date(s)	28–29 February 2012
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kate Pringle

Christine Cottam

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Jim Hall

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Twenty-seven lessons and 24 teachers were observed. Inspectors also observed shorter sessions of support interventions for pupils and listened to reading. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at pupils' books, assessment information, policies and procedures, school development plans and updates of pupils' progress. The views of pupils and staff were considered, together with those of parents and carers in the 145 questionnaires they returned. Inspectors took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.

Information about the school

This is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. There are few pupils on roll from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is much higher than average. The school does not meet the government's current floor standard, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

This is the first inspection for this school, which was amalgamated in September 2010 from two infant and junior schools under the leadership of the present headteacher. The school moved to a new purpose-built building in February 2011. Presently about one fifth of teaching staff are temporary teachers. The governing body runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a satisfactory school. Any difficulties attached to the recent amalgamation have been dealt with well by determined leadership. As a result, pupils are very proud of their new school building. They and their parents and carers are positive about school life. The impact of leadership and management on school improvement is a strength. The school is not good because attainment is no higher than average owing to some inconsistency in teaching across the school.
- Achievement is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall, leaving Year 6 with average attainment. Some teaching is good but the variability in teaching quality results in inconsistent progress between classes. Increased individual support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs means that the gap between these pupils and pupils nationally is narrowing. There have been good improvements in the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics but not all teachers fully use their knowledge of pupils' attainment to plan sufficiently well to provide challenge for all pupils. Some teaching can be too directed by teachers.
- Behaviour and safety are satisfactory overall with some strengths. Pupils enjoy school, demonstrating good relationships with adults and other pupils. A minority of parents and carers were concerned about bullying in the school but inspectors found instances of bullying to be few, well documented and dealt with effectively. Pupils say that behaviour has improved. Attendance is now average after improvements during last year. Pupils enjoy school and recognise the need to attend regularly.
- Leadership and management are good and, as a result, pupils' achievement is improving rapidly. Senior leaders and the governing body understand the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Much has been achieved in a short time, including developing the tracking of pupils' progress. However, this is less well developed in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Leadership's actions to improve teaching are clearly focused with concerted actions to support teachers and raise their performance.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning to be consistently good or better across the school, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and hence improve progress and raise attainment by:
 - making best use of assessment data to plan challenging tasks which meet the needs of individual pupils
 - ensuring good pace to lessons and reducing the amount of teacher direction, enabling pupils to work more independently
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to work together and apply their skills, to investigate and problem solve, through practical and creative activities.
- Secure entry and exit data for the Early Years Foundation Stage in all areas of learning so that the progress made by children can be clearly determined.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Observations in lessons show that pupils are keen to work hard and want to please their teachers. Parents and carers know this and most feel that their children learn well because they can see an improvement in their skills. Overall, learning is satisfactory. It is good or better in lessons where teaching is better than satisfactory. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory progress overall. Progress is good from their starting points in their personal and social development but in other aspects progress is satisfactory, particularly in reading, writing and in the development of mathematical concepts. Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall with pockets of good achievement, especially in Years 2 and 6. Although the 2011 national tests indicate low attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, present indications are that pupils' attainment is improving securely and is now in line with levels nationally. Pupils reach average levels of attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time they leave school.

The introduction of setting of year groups linked to ability in Key Stage 2 is enabling greater challenge with tasks more appropriate for different abilities. Learning is slower in classes where teachers' expectations do not meet the breadth of individual needs. This can limit progress for some pupils because they are not challenged appropriately. There has been a clear focus to improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring good staff development. This has resulted in improvements in reading, writing and mathematics where staff effectively deploy, for example, personal reading programmes, increased opportunities to write at length in other subjects and a consistent application of calculation strategies. Leaders quickly identify pupils who are underachieving from assessment trackers. Subsequently, interventions are increasingly effective for pupils of lower ability and for disabled pupils or those who have special educational needs.

Quality of teaching

The impact of teaching on pupils' achievement over time is satisfactory overall. In the Early Years Foundation Stage a warm and welcoming setting enables children to gain in confidence. They engage well with their friends and with adults, making good gains in their

personal and social development. Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is satisfactory because assessment is not yet used effectively enough to plan for the differing abilities of children. A widening curriculum for young children is enhancing their understanding of the world. For example, the hatching of chicks provided huge interest as children watched the emerging chicks and talked excitedly of the changes that followed as they dried out.

In Key Stages 1 and 2 the quality of teaching is variable and satisfactory overall, although the majority of parents and carers believe their children are taught well because they see an improvement in the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils indicate that they enjoy lessons and learning. Where teaching is good or better, teachers provide activities which are matched accurately to pupils' abilities and challenge their developing skills. Practical activities make good use of past learning and encourage pupils' thinking. In such lessons pupils demonstrate greater enthusiasm because they are more motivated and enjoy their learning. This was evident in a Year 5 mathematics lesson in which pupils worked together to investigate scales needed to construct a graph from information gathered. High-level questions challenged pupils' thinking as they constructed the graph and then determined the scale needed to record their information. Slower progress is made when teachers talk too much and pupils are less engaged. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to be responsible for their own learning and tasks are insufficiently matched to pupils' individual needs.

Teachers have high expectations of behaviour in lessons and successfully encourage good attitudes to learning. They provide opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their understanding of tasks but opportunities for pupils to take more of a lead in their learning are underdeveloped. Recent developments to the planned curriculum mean that there are greater links between subjects and this is enabling pupils to understand how their basic skills can be applied in other subjects. Teaching impacts positively upon pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example through opportunities to develop friendships with pupils from other backgrounds and a wealth of additional experiences through visits and visitors to the school. After-school activities further enhance pupils' skills and understanding.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils are confident that they feel safe in school. They act safely, know whom to turn to for help and can identify the consequences of the actions they take. Parents and carers recognise the high level of care and support given to their children. One comment reflective of such opinions noted, 'I am entirely happy with all aspects of this wonderful new school; all staff are pleasant and helpful. My daughter is thriving and positively looks forward to her school day.' Pupils speak knowledgeably about what constitutes bullying and relate that there is little in the school. They recognise the impact of work by the school to greatly reduce such behaviour. There are occasions at playtime when a few pupils are so immersed in their play that they are less thoughtful towards others than they should be. Leaders and managers acknowledge the impact of the limited play space for pupils, which has resulted in several 'bumps' and are taking steps to address it. The 'Pupils Causing Concern' leader works closely with pupils and families to reduce negative behaviour and improve attendance. Her success is evident in the reduced patterns of such behaviour and attendance is now average with a declining proportion of pupils who are persistently absent.

In lessons behaviour is largely good. Pupils care for their friends and make sure that a good atmosphere for learning prevails. Where the pace of lessons slows, pupils can become distracted and inattentive. A number of additional staff are trained to support pupils and have good relationships with them. Older pupils are clear about improved behaviour over time and talk about how quickly teachers respond to situations when they do occur.

Leadership and management

Over the past eighteen months senior leaders have worked unceasingly towards creating a successful school which has the best outcomes for pupils at its heart. As a result, there have been rapid improvements. The outstanding headteacher is very well supported by senior leaders who all work with a common purpose. A clear focus to drive up the quality of teaching through focused support and professional development has been effective, with a positive impact upon pupils' attainment. Instability in staffing has contributed to the present inconsistency in pupils' progress but this is being tackled by firm leadership. School development plans clearly identify next steps to build upon the progress made so far to raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics further still. All leaders demonstrate a wide range of skills and understanding of their roles. All are aware of the drive towards good improvement and are supported well to develop their leadership skills. Good relationships with parent and carers, positive working partnerships with the high school and strong links with external agencies impact positively upon the confidence and self-esteem of pupils. The successful amalgamation of schools and staff, the managed move to the new building, improved attendance, reduced levels of negative behaviour and improved teaching leading to rising attainment contribute to the good capacity of the school for further development.

Pupils have increased experiences outside of their immediate locality and better opportunities to use their skills in reading, writing and mathematics across different subjects, although the school recognises that this still needs improving in some classes. There are good opportunities to link with schools locally and extend pupils' understanding of differing backgrounds. For example, the 2011 visit to London with another local primary enabled Year 6 pupils to build friendships with those from other cultures in preparation for their move to Year 7. All this is leading to improved achievement; however, the curriculum is satisfactory and not yet good because, as pupils' current attainment demonstrates, it only provides an adequate preparation in the basic skills for future learning. Nevertheless, pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development is good overall.

The governing body has a very detailed knowledge of the school and its work. The high expectations of senior leaders are reflected in the aspirations of governors. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and readily challenge school leaders towards further improvement. Governors fully understand the need to raise attainment even further. They work very successfully with the headteacher and senior leaders to provide a happy and nurturing environment in which pupils feel safe and secure. Close attention is given to the safeguarding that results in the school meeting all current requirements. The promotion of equal opportunity and the tackling of discrimination are good, reflected in the improved attainment of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and the harmonious community within which pupils work and play.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



1 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Harton Primary School, South Shields, NE34 6PF

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave to the inspectors when we visited your school. We found this to be a satisfactory school, where your teachers work hard to help you feel safe and happy. Thank you for talking with the inspectors and to those of you who completed questionnaires. While many pupils behave well in lessons there are a small number of pupils who become so involved in their play at playtimes they can be less thoughtful to others than they should be. We know that the adults in school are looking into this. We found that your attendance is improving, with fewer of you taking time out of school. Your parents and carers feel that the school looks after you well and we agree.

Children settle well into the Nursery and Reception classes and we know that teachers provide lots of activities for them. At the moment there is an unclear picture of the progress young children make and we would ask teachers to be able to show this more clearly. We know that in Years 1 to 6 you enjoy school more when you are actively involved in your learning and that the experiences of visits and visitors help you to learn. We believe that you could achieve even higher if your teachers could help you more. So we would like them to make sure that you make good progress across the school by providing you with tasks which challenge you individually. We know that you particularly enjoy practical lessons where you are able to use your skills in reading, writing and mathematics. We have asked your teachers to provide more of these.

We hope that you continue to enjoy learning and trying your very best in the future.

Yours sincerely

Kate Pringle
Lead Inspector

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