

# Hardwick Primary School

Steward Road, Bury St Edmunds, IP33 2PW

**Inspection dates** 25–26 June 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Children settle in quickly when they start school and make good progress in the Reception Year.
- Pupils in the specialist resource unit make outstanding progress from their low starting points and do much better than similar pupils nationally.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 1 to 4 to reach broadly average attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 4.
- Teaching is good and there is some that is outstanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and make good use of well-chosen activities to motivate pupils. Teaching assistants provide outstanding support for learning.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. Most pupils attend school regularly; they are punctual for lessons and have good attitudes to learning.
- Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and senior leaders ensure a strong and shared commitment among staff for continuous improvement. Governors provide good support for all staff with leadership responsibilities.
- As a result of good leadership, teaching continues to improve, as well as assessment and the curriculum, with outstanding opportunities to enrich learning. The school demonstrates good capacity for sustained improvement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- A few pupils are persistently absent because their parents keep them away from school for too long during term time.
- Learning tasks are not always matched well enough to the different abilities of pupils.
- Teachers do not always inform pupils how to develop their learning when marking their books.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited 21 lessons and observed all teachers teaching. Ten lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and looked at their reading records. They examined two case studies of pupils with the headteacher and discussed a few case studies of pupils from the specialist resource unit with staff from the unit. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work with subject leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with a group of pupils, three governors, senior and middle leaders and staff from the specialist resource unit. A telephone discussion was held with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors met parents when they brought their children to school and held informal discussions with pupils in lessons, at playtime and at lunch time.
- Inspectors looked at 51 responses from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and took account of the questionnaires returned from staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils; attendance figures and information about pupils' progress in the school and in the specialist resource unit; the school improvement plan and summary self-evaluation; and records of visits by the governing body.

## Inspection team

Declan McCarthy, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Angela Savill

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Hardwick is an average-sized primary school which additionally provides specially resourced provision for 15 pupils with special educational needs. This is in the form of a specialist unit for children in the Reception Year and in Years 1 and 2 with speech, language and communication needs, known as the specialist speech and language unit. There are currently 12 pupils attending the unit and all have a statement of special educational needs.
- The majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and a significant number speak English as an additional language.
- A significant number of pupils, whose parents work on contracts of between one and two years at the local hospital, enter or leave the school other than the usual times.
- An average proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are supported through school action. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils eligible for free school meals, those whose families are in the armed services and those looked after by the local authority) is broadly average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has a separate before- and after-school club, which is attended by pupils but managed independently and inspected separately from the school.
- The headteacher has been in post for the past two years and the senior leadership team has been reorganised. The building has been refurbished and a new outdoor learning environment has been created.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by making sure that teachers always:
  - match lesson tasks to the different learning needs of pupils
  - inform pupils of how to develop their learning when marking their books.
- Improve the attendance of the few pupils who are persistently absent from school by working closely with parents and the local authority to reduce the rate of persistent absence by 50% within the next academic year.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- The 2012 published data show that the standards pupils reach by the end of Year 2 are broadly in line with the national average. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language did better than similar pupils nationally, especially in mathematics.
- Children enter the Reception classes with skills and understanding that are below those expected for their age, particularly in communication and language and personal social and emotional development. They make good progress in all areas for learning, especially in phonics (linking sounds to letters) and in personal emotional and social development.
- Results of the 2012 Year 1 national phonics check were below average. However, the school's data suggest that current Year 1 pupils who have just taken these tests are on course to exceed the national average.
- Evidence from pupils' work and lesson observations show that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics through both Key Stages 1 and 2. By the end of Year 4 attainment is broadly average in English and mathematics and has been so in recent years.
- Attainment levels are affected considerably given the above average proportion of pupils who join or leave the school particularly during Key Stage 2. However, the school's robust data and lessons observations show that all pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good progress from their starting points on entry to the school.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and writing as a result of good teaching of phonics and rich opportunities to stimulate reading and writing in different topics, such as invaders and settlers, outer space, and the rainforest.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics because learning is based on solving practical, real-life problems. For example in a topic on houses, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were given the task of identifying and recording the various shapes they could find in their home; and in a Years 3 and 4 athletics lesson, pupils recorded the time taken to complete speed jumping and relay racing and identified their best times.
- In 2012, pupils eligible for the pupil premium were approximately six months behind their classmates in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's data shows that the gap is narrowing in the attainment of pupils eligible for the pupil premium compared with their classmates' attainment. A significant number of these pupils were identified with disabilities and special educational needs, and were receiving support either in mainstream classes or from the specialist speech and language unit. These pupils made at least good progress. This is because the additional funding is used well to provide individual and small group support for these pupils.
- The information about pupils' progress also shows that those pupils who attend the specialist speech and language unit are making outstanding progress from their lower starting points, as they did during the past two years. The overwhelming majority of these pupils successfully transfer to mainstream schools at Key Stage 2 and a significant number return earlier than this.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan interesting activities to stimulate pupils' learning. For example, children in the specialist speech and language unit explored the sea creatures that lived in a model of the beach and sea, based on their recent visit to Sea World.
- Teachers in the Reception Year strive for excellence. The newly refurbished outdoor learning environment for children in the Reception Year is well resourced with a range of large toys, play equipment, soft sand and water. This creates a colourful, vibrant and exciting area to promote the learning for children in the Reception classes and those of Reception age in the specialist unit.
- Teachers plan lessons based on pupils' previous learning and use skilful questioning to develop their understanding. In a Year 4 English lesson, for example, the teacher challenged pupils to define, 'persuasive writing'; after watching a short video clip on the destruction of the rainforests, the teacher then repeatedly challenged different groups of pupils to add more exciting words to their sentences to persuade people not to destroy palm oil plantations.
- Teaching assistants provide outstanding support for pupils with additional needs across the school, including those in the specialist speech and language unit and those who speak English as an additional language. They carefully explain the meaning of unfamiliar words, using practical resources to demonstrate new ideas and visual demonstrations to clarify any misconceptions and deepen pupils' understanding.
- The teaching of communication, literacy and mathematics is good across the school. Teachers use interesting and stimulating activities at the beginning of a topic, clearly identifying the opportunities for promoting these skills across a range of subjects. For example, after simulating the experience of an air journey, Year 1 and 2 pupils wrote extensively about their travels and applied their mathematics and communication skills in a real-life situation.
- Outstanding features of teaching in the specialist speech and language unit consists of the excellent use of well-chosen resources, with a range of learning activities well matched to pupils needs and targets. In a mathematics lesson, for example, a few pupils were working in pairs to estimate, then weigh and record various objects such as a toy hedgehog, using 100g and 10g weights.
- Teachers provide good feedback in lessons on how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve further. Although marking of pupils' work is generally good, pupils are not always informed of how to develop their learning.
- Expectations for learning are usually high although occasionally, as seen in pupils' books and in lessons, all pupils are given the same tasks to do with the result that more-able pupils occasionally find learning too easy while others find learning too difficult.
- Parents praised teaching in the school and its impact on their children's learning, including homework.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils' good behaviour was seen throughout the school, including the specialist speech and language unit, and sometimes it was outstanding, as seen in a whole-school music lesson, and at lunch time when pupils queued for their lunch quietly, showing courtesy and consideration for

others. In the outdoor areas pupils play safely and use athletics equipment safely.

- Pupils have good relationship with their classmates, treating each other with respect, taking turns, listening carefully to the points of view of others and celebrating their successes.
- Good and sometimes outstanding behaviour was seen in lessons. Pupils' consistently good attitudes to learning were seen in their great enjoyment and high levels of concentration. A few pupils lost concentration when tasks were too difficult but responded well and re-engaged with learning quickly when the teaching supported their learning.
- Pupils always respond well to teachers who are consistent in encouraging and rewarding good behaviour.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and know how to avoid it. They say that they feel safe in school and that behaviour is good. Nearly all parents who responded to Parent View and those in discussion with inspectors confirmed that behaviour and safety are good and, on the rare occasion that bullying occurs, it is dealt with quickly and effectively.
- Attendance in recent years is broadly average although it dipped in 2012 because a few parents were taking their children out of school for prolonged periods of time, which is against the school's policy. Although there has been slight improvement this year, the rates of persistent absence are above the national average, despite the school's efforts to reduce this further.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Senior leaders are strongly focused on making sure all pupils are given equal opportunities to success in learning by continuously improving the school. They identify clear priorities for improvement from accurate self-evaluation, and use their checks on the school's work to set clear priorities in the school development plan. As a result there have been good improvements to teaching, the curriculum, assessment and engagement with parents.
- Regular and systematic monitoring of teaching has led to good teaching and a steady rise in the proportion of outstanding teaching seen in the school. Teachers agree with senior leaders their individual targets to improve their practice further. These targets are securely linked to the national guidance on teaching standards and to the headteacher's own performance objectives. This ensures a strong sense of direction and good team work by all staff to reach the same goals.
- The headteacher rightly acknowledges the good support provided by the local authority for the school in checking the school's performance and self-evaluation.
- The curriculum is based on consistent planning between mixed-year classes, which ensures that knowledge, skills and understanding are systematically built up between year groups. There is a strong emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy within topics. The outstanding opportunities to enrich learning include a wide range of trips. High participation rates in the residential visits for outdoor and adventurous activities reflect pupils' enjoyment of all the school offers.
- Good promotion of pupils' spiritual moral and social development is reflected in their good behaviour and safety and attitudes to learning. They learn about other cultures and religions and have good opportunities to reflect on moral and social issues, in assemblies and during their lesson activities.

- Strong partnerships with other schools and outside agencies promote learning well. For example the excellent partnership with the local middle school has enabled pupils to develop sports leadership skills.
  
- The school has developed strong links with parents who are actively involved and contribute to the life of the school. The parents who completed Parent View and those parents who met inspectors during the inspection expressed strongly positive views of the school.
  
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching based on their own interpretation of data, regular school visits and detailed reports they received from the school. They use this information well to shape whole school priorities for improvement, linking these to the performance targets of the headteacher. They oversee the performance of teachers and ensure that good teaching is closely linked to any increases in pay. Governors make sure they hold the school to account for its spending, particularly on how well the school uses pupil premium funding to raise achievement of those pupils who are eligible. Governors ensure that all legal requirements are met, especially for safeguarding. They ensure policies are up to date and regularly check the single central record for accuracy and compliance.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124561
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	412588

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Robert Heavisides
<b>Headteacher</b>	Daryl Jones
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2008
<b>Telephone number</b>	01284 755424
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