

Inspection of Harrold Primary Academy

The Green, Harrold, Bedford, Bedfordshire MK43 7DB

Inspection dates: 17–18 September 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a welcoming, calm and orderly school. Pupils are happy and well cared for. They attend school regularly and arrive on time. Pupils begin learning as soon as they enter their classes, with a sense of purpose and routine. Staff and pupils are proud to be a part of the school. Many parents commented on the many improvements the school has made over the previous year. Leaders are working to improve teaching and learning in some subjects and in the early years.

Parents appreciate the impressive school site where their children learn. Pupils told inspectors that they love learning in the school's well-equipped rooms. Pupils like the library, food technology, separate science and art rooms. They behave well in class and when they walk around the school.

Pupils listen respectfully and thoughtfully during assemblies. They have a growing understanding of British values. Pupils participate in local events held at the local church. They also enjoy taking part in the charity running event, the 'pit-run'.

Pupils feel safe. They told inspectors that bullying is not a problem. Parents agree that staff deal sensitively with any friendship issues. Pupils have positive relationships with adults and other children alike. Playtimes are happy and social occasions. Older pupils in Year 6 take care of the younger pupils during these less-structured times.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders act in the pupils' best interests. They have created an inclusive and welcoming school that is built on a set of core values. The school is improving rapidly. Leaders are building a coherent curriculum. There is some way to go for this to be as well constructed as it needs to be.

The principal has focused sharply on helping pupils becoming fluent mathematicians. Leaders have carefully constructed the mathematics curriculum. Teachers confidently explain mathematical ideas and concepts. Pupils are getting to grips with more complicated mathematical ideas. Teachers provide younger pupils with quality resources. Pupils present their work well in their books. Pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 has improved significantly.

Pupils take books home to share with their parents and carers from a young age. Staff listen to young pupils read frequently. The leader for early reading is determined that as many Year 1 pupils as possible learn phonics well. In 2019, most pupils met the expected standard in the national phonics screening check. Leaders are beginning to improve the teaching of reading in key stage 2.

The curriculum in history and geography is not well organised. In Year 6, pupils do not get the chance to learn the important knowledge in a logical way. Pupils cannot recall important information about their current topic because this knowledge has not been taught. Pupils' work reflects this. Pupils are very good at writing and showing their English skills in these lessons.

In other year groups, the teaching of history and geography is better sequenced. Pupils can show what knowledge they already have. In Year 3, pupils can enthusiastically recall information they learned in Year 2. Equally in French and physical education the curriculum is organised well and planned so that pupils build on what they learned previously.

Leaders have high ambitions for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers adapt learning well so that pupils with SEND fully participate in lessons. Pupils are learning sign language to include everyone in their friendship groups.

Teachers provide additional after-school classes that interest pupils. Pupils enjoy activities such as cookery, football and netball. Leaders offer alternative activities for pupils who prefer quieter hobbies.

Children settle easily into the early years class. The class is arranged so that all the areas for learning are available. The outside area is used well. Children enjoy practising their bike riding and using the construction equipment. However, the curriculum in early years is not as organised as it needs to be. There is no clear plan to show how children will swiftly gain their reading, writing and mathematical knowledge and skills. Children behave appropriately. They listen kindly to the teacher and to each other. Children are very keen to learn.

The multi-academy trust (the trust) supports the school effectively. They have directly governed the school on a temporary basis. This has been to improve the quality of education pupils receive. The trust provides thoughtful support and challenge to school leaders. Staff appreciate the training that the trust provides.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders give safeguarding the highest priority. They train staff effectively to carry out their duties. Staff know how to spot signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. Adults raise any concerns quickly to the appropriate school leader.

Leaders know which pupils need extra support. Leaders work positively with other professionals so that pupils receive the help they need.

The trust keeps adequate staff records. Leaders carry out the necessary checks on staff before staff begin employment.

Teachers help pupils understand how to keep themselves safe when using online technology. Leaders have clear procedures in place for how pupils use mobile phones.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders need to ensure that their clear intentions to prioritise and improve the teaching of reading are implemented effectively. The teaching of reading in key stage 2 needs to be cohesively planned and consistently implemented. Staff are unclear about the progress that pupils should make to reach the demands of the national curriculum.
- The content of some subjects is not precisely chosen and planned. This is particularly the case in geography and history (humanities). The planning of the curriculum does not support teachers to build pupils' knowledge logically and sequentially. Too much time is spent developing writing skills in the topic lesson rather than the subject-specific knowledge pupils need to know. Leaders need to ensure that the content of subject plans is carefully chosen, sequenced and delivered as intended.
- Children start early years with skills that are at least typical for their age. Leaders have insufficient plans to ensure that children are taught systematically and effectively in reading, writing and mathematics during their time in Reception. Leaders now need to provide adults with the necessary training and support, so they can deliver a well-considered curriculum.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	143084
Local authority	Bedford
Inspection number	10110243
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	150
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Vice-chairs of trust	Dr Jeremy Reynolds and Stelios Mores
Principal	Debonair Brown
Website	www.harrold.beds.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- This is the first section 5 inspection since Harrold Lower School converted to an academy in 2016. It became part of the Sharnbrook Academy Federation. At this time, the lower school shared the same site as the middle school which was also part of the trust.
- In 2017, the trust closed the middle school. They expanded the lower school into a primary school to educate pupils from four to 11 years old. The primary school has been operational since this time.
- Harrold Primary School is a one form entry school set on a large site. There is a community pre-school that is separately registered with Ofsted, that is located adjacent to the school.
- There have been significant changes in staff as the school has altered to a primary school. The current principal took up her employment in June 2018. Under the strong leadership of the current principal, the school is regaining its good standing in the community.
- The trust placed an interim board to govern the school and oversee improvements. A local governing body has been set up to begin their responsibilities in September 2019.

- Leaders take account of staff's views when they are making changes to the school. From the Ofsted staff questionnaire, almost all staff agree that leaders are considerate of their workload when making decisions about new policies and procedures. None disagree.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspectors met with: the principal; the special educational needs coordinator; curriculum leaders; teachers; support staff; governors; trustees and pupils.
- Inspectors also spoke with parents at the start of the school day.
- The subjects considered as part of this inspection were: reading, writing, mathematics and humanities. In each subject, inspectors: visited lessons; met curriculum leaders; met teachers; spoke with pupils; and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors took account of 34 responses to Parent View, 19 responses to the staff questionnaire and 39 responses to the pupils' questionnaire. Inspectors also spoke to a number of parents at the start of the school day. Comments made on the free-text service and one parental comment sent directly to Ofsted were also considered.
- Inspectors evaluated a range of documentation, including the school's summary of its own strengths and weaknesses, interim board minutes of meetings, school policies and procedures, and statutory information on the school website.
- Inspectors considered a range of information to determine the effectiveness of safeguarding. They reviewed school policies; met with the designated safeguarding leader; and spoke with pupils, parents, teachers and support staff. Inspectors reviewed the school records of safeguarding checks carried out of adults working at the school. They considered the actions leaders take when a pupil needs extra support.
- Pupils' behaviour and welfare were considered at different times of the school day. Inspectors observed pupils at the start of the school day, during assembly, playtimes and lunchtimes.

Inspection team

Kim Hall, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Katherine Douglas

Ofsted Inspector

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