

Harmans Water Primary School

Address: Wellington Drive, Harmans Water, Bracknell, Berkshire, RG12 9NE

Unique reference number (URN): 130949

Inspection report: 17 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Generally, pupils attend well. Leaders prioritise attendance and punctuality. They reinforce positive attendance through thoughtful whole-school strategies and monitor the impact of their work systematically. For those pupils with lower attendance, carefully targeted support is helping pupils to come to school more often. Leaders pay close attention to the needs of more vulnerable pupils, such as young carers and looked-after children. This helps to ensure that their overall attendance is at least in line with national averages.

The school is a safe environment. Relationships are positive. Staff know pupils well. At the start of each day, they greet pupils by name and check in on pupils' emotional wellbeing individually. This helps pupils to arrive at school happily. Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. They reinforce these through clear systems and routines, acting as role models and teaching about positive behaviour routinely. Throughout the day, pupils behave well. Pupils follow the school's agreed routines and most display positive attitudes towards staff and each other. In classrooms, pupils settle to their learning quickly and respond to teachers' prompts and guidance swiftly. Suspensions are used appropriately. If needed, leaders adapt the behaviour policy to support pupils who need extra help to maintain their self-control.

Early years

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise early years. They have a clear vision for high-quality education and care. This is reflected in the early years curriculum which identifies and sequences the key knowledge that children need to learn. Partnerships with parents and carers are established well from the beginning of each child's school experience. Vulnerable children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, have their needs identified quickly. They learn successfully through appropriate support and adapted provision. Classroom environments are purposeful and well organised, so that children can access a range of activities indoors and outdoors. Adults interact well with children. They make appropriate use of conversation and questions to support children's play and language development.

Children are confident and independent. Songs and rhymes form part of learning routinely. Children show independence in selecting resources, tidying away and choosing where to play. They engage with both adult-guided and self-initiated activities for sustained periods. Overall, children learn well, such as in phonics and reading, and are ready for their next stage of education. However, at times, children's errors and misconceptions are not addressed, such as some handwriting and letter-formation errors. Consequently, a small proportion of children do not achieve as well as they should by the end of Reception Year.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders use their expertise and determination for all pupils to succeed to create an inclusive school. Systems and processes to identify pupils' needs are effective. Staff have the knowledge and skills they need to adapt the curriculum successfully, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have high expectations. Where

needed, they engage with specialists to help reduce any barriers to pupils' learning or wellbeing. For example, leaders work closely with the local authority to enable looked-after children to access learning as successfully as their peers. The school's effective use of reasonable adjustments empowers pupils and their parents and carers. For example, the school's careful approach and some thoughtful strategies enabled all pupils to take part in the recent 'Year 2 sleepover'.

Leaders have built trust with families. They work closely with them to provide valuable support. Many parents recognise that staff's commitment to their children's learning is making a positive difference. Leaders use funding to support disadvantaged pupils effectively. Leaders' well-considered, strategic approach prioritises reading, attendance at school and pupils' wellbeing. Leaders, including governors, monitor the impact of these strategies systematically. Alternative provision is used appropriately for a very small number of pupils who need additional support.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders have high expectations. They have a clear and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The reorganised senior leadership team is skilfully addressing historic areas of weakness. Leaders are reflective and thoughtful in their decision-making, which has the best interests of all pupils at the centre, particularly disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Staff feel valued and that their voices are heard. Leaders are mindful of the impact of change on staff wellbeing and respond sensitively if any concerns are raised. Staff benefit from positive professional learning that is shaping their teaching and learning well. This is particularly evident for support staff who meet some of the more complex needs of individual pupils well. Early career teachers, who are at the start of their teaching roles, are supported effectively.

Governors understand their statutory roles and responsibilities and are trained appropriately to fulfil these. However, some systems that allow governors to support and challenge leaders robustly are new, or are not embedded as effectively as they could be.

Generally, staff, parents and carers are very supportive of leaders. Staff appreciate that their workload has been considered thoughtfully during what has been a period of significant change for the school. Many parents shared their appreciation of the recent improvements across all areas of the school.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Leaders have developed a 'Flourish Tree' which outlines a clear, well-structured programme of personal development for all pupils. This is underpinned effectively by the school's personal, social, relationships and health education curriculum. The curriculum has a clear structure, with themes such as online safety and mental health revisited regularly. Pupils recognise these recurring themes and talk about how their understanding develops as they move through the school. Pupils feel safe and happy.

Pupils thrive through educational visits such as a trip to the beach and to the theatre. These contribute positively to pupils' wellbeing by providing enriching experiences that build pupils' confidence. Pupils talk excitedly about their experiences and remember them fondly. Pupils enjoy sporting opportunities such as cricket and athletics, competing against other schools and representing the school's values such as respect and teamwork. Pupils are proud to have the opportunity to participate. Swimming is valued as a regular part of school life.

Pastoral support is highly effective. Pupils know who to turn to if they ever need extra help or support with their health and wellbeing. Pupils have had training in techniques to help manage their emotions, such as breathing and calming strategies. They can recall this positively and some say they use these regularly. Pupils are proud of their wider contribution to the school. For example, through their roles on the school council or as a play leader working with younger children at social times. Old pupils acts as role models to younger pupils and reflect the school's values well. Pupils feel connected to their school community and develop a clear sense of belonging. Targeted provision, including emotional support, and specific support for groups such as young carers, reflects a well-established commitment to the wellbeing of the whole child and each family at the school.

Needs attention

Achievement

Needs attention 

By the end of key stage 2, too many pupils are not prepared as well as they should be for their next stage of education. Over time, pupils' achievement is variable because some pupils do not secure the essential knowledge they need deeply enough. This is reflected in published outcomes which are below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders are acting quickly to address this. There is already evidence that pupils are learning more effectively, for example in reading and in some areas of the wider curriculum. However, overall, achievement is still not as secure as it should be for some pupils.

Nevertheless, some of the most vulnerable pupils make very positive progress both academically and personally from their starting points. Pupils' individual needs are known, and barriers to learning are removed successfully. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make secure progress within the curriculum across year groups and key stages.

Curriculum and teaching

Needs attention 

Sometimes, pupils' understanding in lessons is not checked as effectively as it should be. At times, pupils' errors and misconceptions are not addressed. As a result, some pupils continue to make mistakes and have gaps in their knowledge. Pupils access a well-planned curriculum, but the curriculum is not implemented consistently well across all subjects. This is because leaders have not made sure that all staff have the subject knowledge and expertise they need to fully utilise the opportunities provided by the wider curriculum.

Leaders' ambition for the curriculum is clear. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development. The curriculum in English and mathematics is well

planned. Lessons in these subjects build pupils' knowledge and skills and are mapped to clear end points at each stage of learning. Across the wider curriculum, leaders have constructed a broad and balanced curriculum that is sequenced appropriately. Where teaching is strongest, staff model their expectations, ask clear questions, and review pupils' understanding systematically. This is especially the case with phonics, as staff model sounds skilfully and teach the scheme with precision. Disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive provision that meets their needs.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils are happy at this caring school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have their needs identified quickly and thoroughly. Staff offer thoughtful, personalised approaches that help vulnerable pupils by removing barriers to their learning and wellbeing effectively.

Pupils develop a sense of belonging. They are proud of their school. Where the curriculum is implemented most effectively, pupils talk confidently about what they have learned and recall information well. For example, when sharing knowledge about what causes earthquakes in geography, or when singing 'Five little ducks' independently in the Early Years provision. However, at times, pupils' understanding in lessons is not checked as effectively as it should be. As a result, a small proportion of pupils make repeated errors. Historically, pupils' achievement by the end of key stage 2 is below national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. Current pupils are beginning to be more secure in their knowledge and understanding, but this is yet to be reflected in published outcomes.

Pupils know the school's values of creativity, resilience, respect, responsibility, teamwork and thoughtfulness well. They value these and model them to each other throughout the school day. Pupils enjoy a rich variety of experiences that develop their talents and interests, including educational visits and inspirational visitors to the school. Recently, pupils' behaviour has improved in response to clear expectations and consistent approaches to behaviour management. Pupils understand what is expected from them and know the school's routines well. Bullying is not common. If there are any incidents they are dealt with quickly.

Attendance is improving. Pupils know that attending school regularly is important, and most attend school regularly. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when online. They are increasingly well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that, by the end of key stage 2, pupils achieve more securely across the curriculum and learn the knowledge and skills that they need to be fully ready for their next stage of education.
- Leaders should ensure that staff are equipped with the expertise they need to implement the full curriculum consistently well, so enabling pupils to build their knowledge more

securely over time.

- Leaders should ensure that staff check pupils' knowledge and understanding across the curriculum, including in the early years, consistently well. This includes offering precise support that helps pupils to avoid repeating errors and addresses misconceptions in their learning.
 - Governors should further develop their knowledge and expertise, in order to provide robust support and challenge to leaders which results in improved achievement for all pupils.
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About this inspection

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

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other school leaders. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school makes use of one registered and three unregistered alternative provisions.

Since the last inspection, the leadership structure has changed. In September 2024, a new headteacher was appointed.

Headteacher: Matthew Irving

Lead inspector:

Carl McCarthy, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Kate Owbridge, Ofsted Inspector

Aimee Floyd, Ofsted Inspector

Julia Roberts, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 17 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

445

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

440

Above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

21.16%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

4.04%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

18.88%

Above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	44%	61%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (revised)	35%	62%	Below
2023/24 (final)	33%	61%	Below
2022/23 (final)	60%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	65%	74%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	60%	75%	Below
2023/24 (final)	58%	74%	Below
2022/23 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	52%	72%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	47%	72%	Below
2023/24 (final)	39%	72%	Below
2022/23 (final)	68%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	61%	73%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	50%	74%	Below
2023/24 (final)	56%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	74%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	23%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	0%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	19%	46%	Below
2022/23 (final)	38%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	52%	62%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	20%	63%	Below

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	43%	62%	Below
2022/23 (final)	76%	60%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	27%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	0%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	24%	58%	Below
2022/23 (final)	43%	58%	Below

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	48%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	20%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	52%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	57%	59%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	23%	68%	-45 pp
2024/25 (revised)	0%	69%	-69 pp
2023/24 (final)	19%	67%	-48 pp
2022/23 (final)	38%	66%	-28 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	52%	80%	-28 pp
2024/25 (revised)	20%	81%	-61 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	80%	-37 pp
2022/23 (final)	76%	78%	-2 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	27%	78%	-51 pp
2024/25 (revised)	0%	78%	-78 pp
2023/24 (final)	24%	78%	-54 pp
2022/23 (final)	43%	77%	-35 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	48%	80%	-32 pp
2024/25 (revised)	20%	81%	-61 pp
2023/24 (final)	52%	79%	-27 pp
2022/23 (final)	57%	79%	-22 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	5.3%	5.2%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	6.3%	5.5%	Above
2022/23 (3 term)	6.0%	5.9%	Close to average

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	14.9%	13.3%	Close to average
2023/24 (3 term)	15.5%	14.6%	Close to average
2022/23 (3 term)	17.5%	16.2%	Close to average

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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