



Huxley CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111286
LEA Cheshire
Inspection number 278646
Inspection dates 26 September 2005 to 26 September 2005
Reporting inspector Mr Graham Martin CfBT Lead Inspector

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Church Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Huxley
Age range of pupils	5 to 11		Chester, Cheshire CH3 9BH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01829 781296
Number on roll	27	Fax number	01829 781149
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Peter Ankers
Date of previous inspection	6 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Lynda Herrick

Age group 5 to 11	Inspection dates 26 September 2005 - 26 September 2005	Inspection number 278646
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

This is a very small Church of England primary school situated in a rural village near Chester. It has been providing education for its community since 1853. All pupils are White British. The numbers claiming free school meals is below average, as is the percentage with learning difficulties or disabilities. The school has a Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Healthy Schools and Artsmark (Gold) Awards and is part of a federation of ten small schools in its geographical area. Attainment on entry to the reception class is average.

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 and it has some outstanding features. In this judgement, inspectors agree with the school's own view of its effectiveness. Although a school of this size is costly to run, it gives good value for money by providing outstanding learning opportunities and in caring for its pupils exceptionally well. Flourishing partnerships provide excellent opportunities for pupils to learn and for supporting their welfare exceptionally well.

In a school with so few pupils, comparisons with national statistics must be treated with great caution but analysis of pupils' work shows that all make good progress. They reach standards above national expectations at Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils who find learning difficult achieve well because they receive good support and guidance from adults. Pupils' personal development is good. Teaching and learning is sometimes outstanding and is good overall. Provision for reception children in the Key Stage 1 class is good, leading to above average standards by the end of the reception year. The headteacher leads the school well and has the benefit of good support from all staff. Governance has improved since the last inspection but governors recognise the need to further develop the skills required to support the school most effectively. Accommodation has improved and the recent purchase of some land enables further outdoor development. Overall, the school has improved well since the last inspection and demonstrates good capacity to maintain this improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

The inspector found nothing in the school that was inadequate. Further improvement could be achieved by:

- Continuing with its planned priorities to raise standards in writing and mathematics.
- Continuing to involve pupils in the development of the outdoor environment.
- Defining governors' roles and responsibilities so that all can contribute to the school's success and development.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

With such very small numbers in Years 2 and 6, it is of very limited statistical value to compare the standards pupils reach in national tests with nationally published averages. From sampling pupils' work and looking at teacher assessment records, the inspection confirms the school's judgement that standards are above average and achievement is good.

Children start school with broadly average standards. They make good progress and by the end of the reception year many achieve the standards expected for children this age whilst about a third exceed these standards. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, continue to make good progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 2 most attain the nationally expected standards in reading,

writing and mathematics and some exceed them. Year 6 boys and girls achieve the challenging but realistic targets set for their performance in national tests. In 2005, all pupils attained at least the nationally expected standards in English and Science, with some attaining the higher levels, and most attained or exceeded the expected standard in mathematics.

Good use of assessment is helping to further raise standards in writing and numeracy. The school is continuing with robust strategies for improvement, including setting individual learning targets for pupils to improve writing and numeracy skills. It sets challenging attainment targets in English and mathematics for the Year 6 pupils and is largely successful in achieving these.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

This is a good aspect of the school's work, with outstanding features in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and in their enjoyment of learning.

Pupils enjoy their learning immensely and their behaviour is very good. Attendance is above average. Positive attitudes mean that, by Year 6, pupils are confident and eager learners who take pride in their achievements. Very good relationships lead to an atmosphere of trust and confidence that reflects the school's Christian ethos. Pupils agree that their school provides them with the security, skills and confidence to be good learners, as seen in the attitude of the only Year 6 boy in the school, who commented:

'I never feel lonely because my school is like a big family'.

The overwhelming majority of parents value the way the school promotes their children's personal development.

Pupils recognise their responsibilities as citizens and members of their community, for example through working to help improve the school's outdoor environment. The school council takes an active lead in such work, setting a good example for other pupils in the businesslike conduct of their meetings and their co-operation with adults. Pupils understand and value the school's work to help them adopt a healthy lifestyle. They recognise that there can be hazards in some of the things they do and learn well how to minimise risks to themselves and others.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good overall and sometimes outstanding. As a result, pupils learn and achieve well. They say that teachers make lessons fun and interesting, and they particularly enjoy learning when given opportunities to investigate problems and use practical skills.

Teachers' planning is particularly good so that pupils of different ages in the same class receive suitably challenging work. Careful assessment by teachers helps pupils to achieve their best. Pupils who find learning difficult are given good adult support to help them do their best, while pupils with particular gifts or talents benefit from the learning challenges set for them. Pupils appreciate learning through contact with other adults. Very effective use is made of specialist teachers to develop pupils' skills in sport, the arts and modern foreign languages, as well as providing good opportunities for pupils to visit other schools to enrich their learning. Pupils say these opportunities give them chances 'to meet new people and learn about the world beyond our village.'

Good relationships among adults and pupils are reflected in pupils' good attitudes to learning. Effective teaching of practical mathematics as part of a partnership with other schools is helping to raise standards in investigative skills. Good teaching of literacy and numeracy in other subjects helps pupils secure the basic skills needed for the world of work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It meets statutory requirements and is rich, diverse and exciting.

As a partner in a local federation of schools and through working with a local high school, the school provides diversity and richness of opportunity that would otherwise be difficult to make available. This includes lessons in modern foreign languages, sports competitions, arts events and opportunities for pupils to meet and make friendships with children from other schools in this rural community. Pupils say that this is one of many things the school does well to help them transfer confidently from a small primary to a large high school. Pupils are very appreciative of how their teachers help them learn through activities outside lessons. For example, they talk about designing and building a display float for their village fete, taking part in a local music festival and folk dancing at an international event. Educational visits and a good number of extra-curricular clubs enhance pupils' enjoyment of learning and promote their health and safety.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its pupils. Relationships are very good. Children starting school are made to feel at home by older pupils. The school is a very happy place where pupils know they are valued and have someone to rely on if they have a concern. This makes learning all the more effective. Pupils behave well because of the school's successful strategies for encouraging, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour.

Close attention is paid to ensuring pupils are safe, with risk assessments carried out rigorously. Parents express great satisfaction with the way the school cares for their children.

Very effective programmes for personal, social and health education encourage pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles. Their work has helped the school receive awards for healthy eating. Pupils develop a strong sense of responsibility as members of a wider community. They are active in supporting charitable causes. The school successfully develops pupils' awareness of the world of work through excellent partnerships with other schools and local businesses.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school judges leadership and management to be good and the inspection confirms this. The headteacher's vision and commitment to equal opportunities is outstanding, reflected in the school's Christian ethos and the work of all staff.

The headteacher puts her leadership and management skills to good use by sharing responsibilities well among staff. This also enables her to fulfil a significant teaching commitment. Clear delegation of responsibilities allows all staff to be well aware of how they can contribute to improvement and the action they need to take. Governors make a sound contribution to this process. Their understanding of the school's work and its aims is improving, enabling them to support and challenge satisfactorily.

The school makes good use of its resources. The headteacher successfully raises additional funds and support to improve the school's accommodation and its overall provision. For example, good community links led to the purchase of a corner of a nearby meadow, creating a school field that pupils aim to develop as a learning resource.

Excellent links with other schools and agencies help the school fulfil its aims. Good systems are in place for checking the effectiveness of its work and for taking appropriate action to improve. The school's self-evaluation is accurate and clearly identifies priorities for improvement. Parents and pupils are consulted closely as part of this process, for example when the school reviewed its homework, equal opportunities and sex and relationships education policies. Such commitment to pupils' involvement flows directly from strong implementation of the school's positive ethos by the headteacher and from its outstanding opportunities and climate for learning. The strengths in its leadership indicate that the school has good capacity to improve further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

I recently visited your school to inspect its work for the Office for Standards in Education (OfSTED). My job was to find out how well your school is working for you, your family and your community. I would like to thank you for the friendly welcome you gave to me and for helping me to find out about the work that you do together.

There are many good, and some excellent, things about your school to be proud of.

These are the things that I especially liked:

- The way that your teachers give you lots of excellent activities to help you to enjoy learning and achieve well.
- The way the adults in your school care for each of you equally well, giving you excellent support and guidance throughout your time in the school.
- The way you all see your school like a large family, showing very good kindness and care for each other.

I have suggested a few things that will help your school to improve some more. Here they are:

- I would like your teachers to continue with their good work to make your writing and mathematics better.
- You should continue with the good work you have started to develop the outside areas of the school now that you have more land.
- Some of the adults, called school governors, who help to manage the school could find ways to become even better at advising your headteacher.

I enjoyed my visit to your good school very much and wish you all well for the future.