

Huntingdon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135568
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	341672
Inspection dates	12–13 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Heather Weston HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	439
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Wyatt
Headteacher	Ms Cyndy Fiddy
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ambury Road Huntingdon Cambridgeshire
Telephone number	01480 389034
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors saw 18 teachers, visited 21 lessons, and scrutinised pupils' work. They joined 2 assemblies, observed break-times, held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and met informally with parents. Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school development plan, policies relating to safeguarding, and school data and 83 parental questionnaires, staff and pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- current standards and rates of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science
- why higher ability pupils make less progress than other ability groups at both Key Stages 1 and 2
- how accurately staff assess pupils' levels of work and how effectively are they use data to promote pupil progress
- the effectiveness of teaching in promoting pupil progress and eliminating underachievement
- the action being taken to promote attendance
- how effectively leaders have created a cohesive culture with shared high expectations

Information about the school

Huntingdon Primary School opened in January 2009 as a result of the amalgamation of Huntingdon Infant and Junior Schools. For four terms prior to the amalgamation Huntingdon Junior School had been led and managed by a temporary acting headteacher for three terms and then by the deputy head as acting headteacher for one term.

The school is much larger than most primary schools. An above average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly average, as is the proportion of pupils who do not speak English as a first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average, and the proportion with a statement of special educational need is well above average.

The school shares a site with Huntingdon Nursery School and a Hearing Impaired Unit managed by the local authority. The school has the National Healthy Schools Award.

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: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

The headteacher has successfully steered the school through the multitude of issues that arise when amalgamating two relatively large schools. The governing body rightly wished to ensure that the required procedures and policies were in place relating to staff, safeguarding, health and safety, and more. The headteacher had to carry too much of the load in this process, however, and although governance is satisfactory, governors have not given her sufficient support or actively monitored the work of the school. In addition, the governing body has not ensured the school meets statutory requirements in relation to the promotion of community cohesion. Staff are very committed and are successfully beginning to bond as a new team after staff numbers were reduced and roles and responsibilities were restructured.

The headteacher has been very ably and very well supported by the deputy headteacher who, having worked in the junior school prior to amalgamation was able to support continuity in the running of the school. The senior leadership team is very new but leaders are developing their new roles well. The quality of teaching has been monitored and some key procedures are being adopted throughout the school. However, there has been too great an emphasis on the quality of teaching with too little focus on its impact on learning. As a result, although teaching is satisfactory overall, and inspectors observed some good and outstanding lessons, too many teachers are failing to match planned activities to pupils' learning needs, particularly for pupils who are more able, gifted or talented. Teachers make sure that pupils know what to include in a successful piece of work through the use of 'success criteria'. However all children have the same success criteria and teachers are not making sure that different groups of children have appropriately planned criteria so that they know exactly what it is that they are learning. In addition although some teachers are giving very good marking feedback and use targets well to help pupils improve their work, practice is inconsistent. Pupils' progress is enhanced by teaching assistants and the inclusion team who are very effective in the support they give to pupils with barriers to their learning. The level of care, guidance and support given to the pupils is very good, and the school works very effectively with a range of partners to promote pupils' learning and well-being.

Outcomes for pupils are satisfactory overall, with satisfactory achievement. Some aspects of pupils' personal development, including their social, moral and spiritual development, are good. Standards reached by pupils in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 in 2009 were well below average and pupils had not made sufficient progress throughout their time in Key Stage 2. Current pupils are working at standards which are slightly higher, but still below average, and Year 6 pupils are in line to meet their targets at the end of the year. Rates of progress vary throughout the

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school but are satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching is not strong enough to ensure that progress is accelerated so that pupils, particularly those who are more able, reach higher standards.

Senior leaders and governors are aware of the need to strengthen relationships with parents and carers, a number of whom show through their responses to the parent questionnaires that they are not fully supportive of the school's leadership. Some feel that the school does not take account of their suggestions and a few expressed concern that they do not have the opportunity to meet the headteacher outside informally in the mornings. The school has not yet systematically sought parents' views in order to gauge their opinions and to enable them to become more involved in decision making. Parents are not sufficiently involved in supporting their children's learning and in helping them make better progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate learning and raise standards in English, mathematics and science by:
 - improving consistency in the use of assessment data to match learning to pupils' needs, particularly for able, gifted and talented pupils
 - ensuring that success criteria include clear learning outcomes for each lesson so that different groups of pupils know exactly what they are learning
 - ensuring marking and the use of targets enable all pupils to improve their work.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - improving the quality of monitoring processes by leaders so that they have greater impact on improving teaching and learning
 - improving the effectiveness of the governing body by ensuring that governors monitor the work of the school, and give appropriate support as well as challenge to senior leaders
 - ensuring that the school meets statutory requirements in relation to the promotion of community cohesion
- Strengthen relationships with parents and carers by:
 - ensuring parents become more involved in their children's learning
 - having a stronger presence from the headteacher and senior leaders to meet parents informally in the mornings
 - systematically seeking parents' views to enable them to become more involved in decision making.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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The low outcomes in Key Stage 2 tests in 2009 were not representative of past standards reached by pupils in the junior school. Evidence from the school's tracking data, from lesson observation and from a review of pupils work showed that current attainment, although below average are not as low as last year. Although more able pupils only just make satisfactory progress, many pupils with English as an additional language and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress due to the quality of interventions.

Pupils say that they enjoy school. They feel that the school is safe and that any incidents of unkindness or bullying which may occur are dealt with well. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school. A small minority of pupils do have behaviour difficulties but they are supported well and as a result their behaviour rarely affects the learning of others. Pupils understand the importance of a healthy diet, and other health related topics covered in lessons such as science. Provision for physical education is good, and there is a good take-up rate for extra-curricular sport. Older pupils make a good contribution in school through their work as dinner monitors and house captains. The elected school council has met twice this academic year, and is beginning to contribute to decision making in the school. The school rightly places a high priority on attendance and has clear expectations that pupils attend regularly and on time. Attendance rates are just below average. Pupils are developing satisfactory skills for future use in the workplace. They are confident with a range of information and communication technology skills but have limited opportunities to develop skills relating to enterprise. Although pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good, they have only a satisfactory understanding of cultural issues.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Overall, teaching is promoting satisfactory learning and satisfactory progress, but its quality varies throughout the school. In the minority of lessons where teaching is good or better, pupils know exactly what they are going to learn and how to produce good work. Teachers refer to the expected learning outcomes through the lesson and when marking pupils work, giving clear guidance for improvement. Further good features are that pupils actively engage in their learning through a range of effective teaching strategies such as the use of personal white boards and 'talk partners'. Interactive white boards are used well to promote learning. Teachers have consistent high expectations relating both to work and to behaviour. However in the majority of lessons where teaching is satisfactory or, on occasions, weaker, pupils do not know what they are expected to learn, and marking and the use of assessment do not lead to improvement. Teachers do not have high enough expectations or set sufficiently high expectations for all pupils, notably more able pupils. However teaching assistants support pupils well in all lessons. They give good support to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, although there is an over-reliance by some teachers on this support, which limits the development of pupils' independent learning skills.

The curriculum is broad and balanced. A recent initiative to bring all pupils written work into one book, whatever the subject, has helped to improve consistency in the quality of pupils' written work. Currently the curriculum does not make enough explicit links between subjects and the topics planned are not always imaginative enough to capture children's interests. The school is aware that the curriculum needs to be modernised in a number of ways, and a new curriculum is being planned for September 2010. The range of extra-curricular activities is good, especially in relation to sports activities.

The strong inclusion team supports pupils' learning very effectively. This team has been enhanced by the appointment of a new inclusion manager. Arrangements for making sure that all pupils attend regularly and can access their learning are very good. The school's strong links with a wide range of agencies ensure pupils at risk are supported well. The attendance and inclusion group provides effective support for those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Staff are well deployed and are particularly effective in ensuring good support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils with English as an additional language. Transition arrangements as pupils join and leave the school are good.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Self evaluation is largely accurate. Strategic planning is clear and detailed and focuses on appropriate priorities for development. Leaders have set challenging targets for improvement. Although the impact of teaching on learning is satisfactory, action taken to develop the use of assessment means that teachers have the tools to promote better progress. Teachers are aware of their responsibility for seeking to secure good progress for pupils in their class. Performance management and regular progress meetings support them in this process.

The strength of partnerships with a range of outside agencies is having a positive impact on pupils' well-being and learning. The school is committed to ensuring that all pupils can access their learning. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. All staff are fully informed of procedures and child protection concerns are identified and dealt with effectively. Risk assessments are secure. The school's promotion of equal opportunity and the tackling of discrimination is satisfactory. Although the governors have not met their statutory duties in relation to evaluating the school's contribution to community cohesion and setting clear plans in place, the school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. Work has been carried out to reduce tension between some groups of pupils and families and to prevent cyber bullying. However the school is aware that it needs to strengthen relationships with parents.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle well into school in their Reception Year due to effective induction arrangements and to a clear understanding on the part of the staff team of how young children learn. The good focus on children's personal, social and emotional development means that children's behaviour is good and that they make good progress in this area. In all other areas children make satisfactory progress from below average starting points and enter Year 1 with standards below the levels expected for their age. Their learning environment is stimulating and children experience good opportunities for purposeful play. However, planning does not consistently include clear learning outcomes, particularly in relation to outdoor play and this restricts progress in all areas. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a clear understanding of areas for development and ensures all welfare requirements are met.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Most parents are happy with their children's experience at the school. However, a minority of parents who responded to the questionnaire feel that the school does not deal effectively with behaviour. Inspectors are aware that a small minority of pupils do experience difficulty with behaviour but feel that any unacceptable behaviour is dealt with very effectively and all teachers use behaviour management procedures well. A small minority of parents' responses indicate that they feel that the school is not led and managed effectively and that the school does not take account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors do not agree that the school is not led and managed effectively, although they agree that the school does not seek the views of parents sufficiently and also that parents are not sufficiently involved, both in decision-making processes and in contributing to their children's education.

A number of parents of pupils' with barriers to their learning or with special educational needs and/or disabilities were strongly supportive of the school and felt that staff,

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including senior leaders, have made every effort to help their child.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Huntingdon Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspector received 83 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection, of which 69 were analysed. The 14 questionnaires received after the analysis had been carried out reflected the balance of views set out below. In total, there are 439 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	47	55	34	40	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	40	47	41	48	3	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	41	41	48	8	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	40	41	48	9	10	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	36	42	40	47	6	7	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	42	40	47	5	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	40	48	56	3	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	32	37	43	50	4	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	38	39	45	8	9	3	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	21	32	37	20	23	11	13
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	23	42	49	16	19	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	28	33	37	43	13	15	4	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	44	36	42	9	10	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



14 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Huntingdon Primary School, Cambridgeshire, PE29 1AD

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently, for talking to us and showing us your work. We very much enjoyed our visit and finding out about the interesting things you do in lessons and in clubs. We thought that your 'bring your bike to school' day looked great fun! We could see you enjoy school and we thought that you are polite and sensible. We also thought that all the adults at school work very hard to help you do your work.

We think your school is satisfactory because at the moment the standards you reach in your work are not as high as they could be. All the staff are working hard to help you make progress and reach higher standards, and you are helping by behaving well. To help you make better progress we have asked the governors, Ms Fiddy and the staff to do these things:

- help you all make better progress in your lessons, especially those of you who find learning easy
- make sure that your work is neither too easy nor too hard
- make sure that you know exactly what you are expected to learn
- make sure you know how you can improve your work by, for example, letting you know when marking your work how to make it even better and by using the targets in your books regularly
- work more closely with your parents and help your parents to be more involved in helping you learn.

You can help by continuing to behave so well, by attending regularly and on time, and by encouraging your parents to help you with your work

Yours sincerely,

Heather Weston

Her Majesty's Inspector

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