

# Hunton Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118726
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	379670
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 September 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Eileen Chadwick

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	82
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jacqui White
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sue Wood
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 November 2008
<b>School address</b>	Bishops Lane Hunton Maidstone ME15 0SJ
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited nine lessons and observed six teachers. Inspectors held meetings with pupils, staff with key responsibilities and a representative of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and evaluated documentation such as policies, the school improvement plan, pupils' work and records of their learning and progress, and the school's safeguarding procedures. Inspectors analysed 37 completed questionnaires from parents and carers, nine from members of staff and 41 completed by pupils in Key Stage 2.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Children's attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage and how well children progress in Reception.
- How consistently pupils develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills across the school.
- Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6, including that of the current Year 6 and the impact of teaching and learning on raising attainment.
- Whether teaching and the curriculum consistently meet the learning needs of different groups of pupils.
- The impact of leaders' work on bringing about improvements in English and mathematics.

## Information about the school

This primary school is below average in size. It draws its pupils from the local village and further afield. While most pupils are White British, an average proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds with the largest group, at 7%, of Gypsy/Roma heritage. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The majority of these pupils have speech, language, literacy, numeracy and/or emotional and behavioural difficulties. The number of pupils who either join or leave the school other than at the normal times is above average and high for the current Year 6, half of whom joined the school during Key Stage 2. The Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in a single age Reception class. All other classes contain pupils of two age ranges.

In September, the substantive headteacher became part time, working three days each week, while a senior teacher, the school leader, now leads the school for the rest of the time. The school runs a daily breakfast club. It holds a number of awards, including Healthy Schools.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. It is on a journey of sustained improvement and has many strengths with a few areas in need of improvement. Pupils develop a love for reading and make excellent progress in this subject in Reception. Pupils flourish academically and personally and feel extremely safe. The good teaching, curriculum, care, guidance and support all contribute to pupils' good behaviour and achievement. The headteacher is a strong leader and is well supported by the senior team. The great majority of parents and carers are very pleased with the school and one expressed the views of many saying, 'Hunton Church of England Primary School consistently goes above and beyond to assist all children and to develop each child as an individual.'

Pupils' progress is good and, by Year 6, their attainment in English and mathematics is broadly average. However, slightly fewer reach the nationally expected levels in both English and mathematics than in most schools and individual pupils' attainment is occasionally not the same in English and mathematics. Changes to teaching have ensured good improvements in pupils' writing since the previous inspection. Pupils now write fluently for a range of purposes but spelling and punctuation are relatively weaker. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils from different minority ethnic groups make progress in line with their peers. Later entrants to the school are helped to quickly adjust and do well. The school provides robust procedures for helping those who need to catch up.

Rates of learning and progress are good because the strong focus on checking and developing teachers' work has led to much good teaching. Teachers match pupils' work closely to their ability levels in most lessons. However, in a minority of lessons, they do not make the best use of assessment and work is a little too hard for the lowest attaining pupils. On a few occasions, in Years 3 and 4, there is not enough direct teaching of reading, particularly phonics (sounds and letters), for the lowest attaining pupils during writing lessons.

Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders provide strong leadership and management systems. The revised leadership structure is empowering leaders at all levels so they can play a full part in raising achievement. Governors are a real asset and provide strong support and challenge. Accurate self-evaluation gives the school a good understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement. Assessment systems are having a good impact in helping senior leaders and teachers to accurately

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pinpoint how well different groups are achieving. However, while demanding targets have been set for most pupils, Year 1 targets are occasionally modest in the light of pupils' attainment at the end of Reception. The school is already working to build better continuity in children's learning in literacy, numeracy and assessment across Reception and Year 1 and is aware that pupils' progress at the beginning of Year 1 is not yet as consistently good as in Reception and Year 2.

The school has maintained the strengths seen at the previous inspection and appropriate developments have resulted in much improved attainment for more capable pupils and an increase in pupils' attendance, which is above average. This, together with the way teachers and support staff work very effectively together, sharing a drive and ambition to improve pupils' achievement, confirms the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

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

- Raise achievement by July 2012 through:
  - increasing the proportions reaching the expected levels in English and mathematics
  - improving pupils' spelling and punctuation
  - setting more challenging literacy and numeracy targets for Year 1 pupils.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good and increasing proportions outstanding by July 2012 through:
  - improving the direct teaching of reading and the way phonics skills are consolidated for lower attaining pupils during writing lessons in Years 3 and 4
  - making better use of assessment to ensure that work is consistently matched to lower attaining pupils' abilities.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**2**

Pupils' enthusiasm for learning was frequently seen in lessons and their positive attitudes are a key reason for their good achievement. On entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's starting points are lower than those seen in children of a similar age, especially in communication, language and literacy. They make good progress in Reception, especially in reading. In recent years, pupils' rising attainment in the Reception class and Key Stage 1 has led to pupils being better prepared for their junior education.

Pupils' progress is good overall in Key Stage 2. Thorough assessment of pupils' attainment and progress and successful actions to address any underachievement ensure that girls, boys and pupils from different backgrounds, including those of Gypsy/ Roma heritage, achieve equally well. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress while the effective provision of small group work for pupils who struggle in English and mathematics contributes to their good

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achievement. However, in Years 3 and 4, while there is some good learning, the work does not always build so well from lower attaining pupils’ starting points in literacy. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are helped very well and the incidence of poor behaviour is rare. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They reported virtually no bullying and trust adults to deal with any that might occur.

Inspectors’ lesson observations and the evaluation of pupils’ tracking data and their work showed that learning is usually good. Practical activities, including outside visits, are often used successfully to prepare pupils for academic work. This was seen in a good literacy lesson for Years 5 and 6 where, after visiting the Imperial War Museum, pupils wrote good descriptions of Second World War settings from the perspective of different characters. Good links with reading for all abilities enriched pupils’ vocabulary, literacy skills and historical understanding.

This is a cohesive and harmonious school. Of special note is pupils’ respect for other cultures, religions and backgrounds. They make a good contribution to the local community, in which the school plays an important part, as well as their school community. Pupils willingly and responsibly help in many ways, including in their duties as school councillors when helping the school to make some necessary decisions. Pupils greatly enjoy a wide range of physical activities to help them to keep fit. They also have a good understanding of the need for healthy eating and this is reflected in the school’s national award. The school’s strong focus on good attendance is leading to improved attendance overall, and in particular for a minority of pupils, including those from the Traveller community, which had previously been below average. This is helping to promote these pupils’ better progress. Pupils’ average attainment in literacy and numeracy, good attendance and worthwhile business and enterprise activities prepare them soundly for the future.

*These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes*

<b>Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils’ behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will</b>	<b>3</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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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<b>contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

Pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations for behaviour. Interactive whiteboard technology and practical resources are successfully used to make lessons interesting and varied. Teaching typically leads to pupils' good learning because teachers skilfully use their good subject knowledge and accurate assessment information to plan activities that build well on previous learning and experiences. Generally, teachers and teaching assistants know precisely which skills pupils need to develop and provide well-matched activities that are motivating and enable good progress. Daily reading and phonics sessions and involvement of parents and carers in home reading promote good learning. In a good phonics session for Year 2, for example, the strong match of sounds, letters, reading and writing activities to pupils' prior attainment ensured all pupils learned at a good rate. However, in a few lessons, learning tasks were not fully adjusted to meet lower attaining pupils' needs. This included the consolidation and teaching of key phonics and reading skills in written tasks. Support staff are effectively deployed and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, while focusing effectively on basic skills. Wherever possible, meaningful links are made between subjects. Exciting visits and practical learning opportunities bring learning alive and underpin academic learning. For example, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils created simple poems after using their senses to investigate different foodstuffs. Good partnerships with other schools enable pupils to benefit from a wider group of professionals' expertise than would normally be possible in a school of this size, especially in sport.

Pupils work and play in a very safe, secure and welcoming environment, where they know that they are valued as individuals and that their views count. Good partnerships with parents and carers contribute to pupils' excellent feelings of personal safety and security as well as to their good learning. Induction and transition arrangements are good. They are used very effectively in helping Reception and later entrants to the school to settle very quickly. The school works effectively to support and include pupils whose circumstances may make them more vulnerable. It draws upon its good links with outside specialists to help these pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, for example pupils with speech and language difficulties. The breakfast club provides a happy and caring start to the school day.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders, staff and the governing body are ambitious, and effective procedures to bring about improvement have been put in place now that the headteacher is part-time. There are clear roles and responsibilities assigned to the new school leader. The united staff team are clear about the school’s direction and their role within this. Detailed and frequent checks on all aspects of the school’s work involve all staff and governors as well as leaders. Careful analysis of the progress made by individuals and groups of pupils is used to ensure any variations in performance are addressed. Demanding attainment targets have been set for most years but are not always challenging for Year 1, given their rising attainment at the end of Reception. The governing body are well organised and very well led by the Chair. Members of the governing body closely monitor action points for improvement and effectively challenge the school about achievement matters. They have ensured that premises are well maintained and have secured much improvement to the school building.

There are comprehensive procedures to safeguard all pupils. These arrangements are given high priority and are implemented rigorously, including recruitment of staff, first aid, child protection and site security. This is affirmed by the high degree of endorsement from parents and carers in the questionnaires returned and pupils’ unequivocal view that they feel safe. The school is vigilant in tackling discrimination and promotes equality of opportunity well. Community cohesion is good. The school celebrates the diversity of its community and has good links at an international level, for example through an annual global awareness week. Work is being established to further links at a national level.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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



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<b>tackles discrimination</b>	
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter with a wide range of skills and knowledge but, overall, they are below those of similar age children, especially in their speaking and listening skills. They make good progress in all areas of their learning, More able children are quickly identified and provided with more challenging work. Very positive relationships ensure children feel safe and secure. Staff’s strong focus on developing children’s language and personal skills enables all children to make a good start, including those who enter with much lower communication and personal skills than expected. Teaching and learning are good and excellent for reading, including phonics (sounds and letters). In an excellent story and phonics lesson, children were mesmerised as they helped the teacher and ‘puppets’ identify initial sounds in words as they listened to the ‘Owl Babies’ story. Whole-class singing of well-chosen songs and exciting practical group activities reinforced children’s early understanding of sounds and letters extremely well. The staff work closely together as a team and ensure there is a good balance between activities directed by the adults and those chosen by the children. Children’s independence is well promoted by the children planning those activities they will be doing themselves. The recently built Reception accommodation permits stimulating purposeful play activities. The recently refurbished outside area is spacious and used to provide suitable learning opportunities across most areas of learning; however, it is not yet utilised to enhance children’s learning as fully as it might. The provision is well led. Assessment is thorough and carefully analysed to check the impact of provision on children’s progress.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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## Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents or carers who returned the questionnaires were overwhelmingly positive about the school and its impact on their children's learning and well-being. They are very pleased with the way the school is led and managed. They feel their children are kept safe and their children really enjoy school and make good progress. Additional comments included appreciation for the way children are treated and known as individuals. Some parents and carers of pupils who were later entrants wrote to say how pleased they are with the way in which their children had settled and were progressing. Their views reflect inspection findings. Very small minorities of parents and carers expressed concern that pupils do not always behave well enough or that the school does not listen to their concerns. The inspection team find that pupils' behaviour is good and well managed. The inspection team investigated the very few concerns raised by parents and carers, which followed no pattern, and found the school had responded appropriately to them. Inspectors also found the school is vigilant in its work with parents and carers, including responding to any concerns they might raise.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hunton Church of England 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 inspection team received 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 82 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	59	12	32	2	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	68	9	24	0	0	2	5
The school informs me about my child’s progress	18	49	15	44	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	18	49	13	35	0	0	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	21	57	10	27	0	0	2	5
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	17	46	14	38	2	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	25	68	11	30	0	0	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)	17	46	12	32	0	0	2	5
The school meets my child’s particular needs	18	49	14	38	0	0	2	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	51	9	24	2	5	2	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	20	54	8	22	2	5	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	25	68	7	19	0	0	2	5
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	28	76	6	16	0	0	2	5

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 all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



23 September 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Hunton Church of England Primary School, Maidstone ME15 0SJ**

Thank you so much for making us so welcome and for helping us with the inspection when we recently visited your school. Your views are important, as you are the school's customers.

Your school is a good one. Here are some of the many things your school does well.

- Those of you in Reception make a good start to your education and enjoy all the activities.
- You make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You make your school a special place, because you are good learners, are friendly, work hard and behave well.
- Your teachers are good at making your lessons interesting.
- Staff take very good care of you and you told us how safe you feel.
- Your headteacher leads you all very well and all the staff and governors think very carefully about what is best for you.

This is what we have asked your school to do to improve:

- help a few more of you to reach the levels expected of you, making sure your attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is closely matched
- help you to improve your spelling and punctuation
- make sure your progress in Year 1 is always as good as in Reception and Year 2
- help your teachers to always plan activities for you that build on what you already know.

Well done for improving your attendance so well. Please keep this up! We hope you will continue to enjoy school and carry on working hard in all you do, including to improve your spelling and punctuation.

Yours sincerely

Eileen Chadwick  
Lead inspector

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