

Huntingtower Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120377
Local Authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	380003
Inspection dates	6–7 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Roderick Passant

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	320
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Diane Coleman
Headteacher	Mark Anderson
Date of previous school inspection	10 December 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 10 teachers teaching 14 lessons. In addition, they carried out a range of brief observations to see the school at work and scrutinised a sample of pupils' work from Year 4 and Year 6. They held meetings with members of the senior leadership team, older members of the school council, a group of Year 6 pupils, and governor representatives, including the Chair of the Governing Body. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of policies and documentation associated with safeguarding and school improvement planning. They scrutinised the questionnaire responses from 112 parents and carers, 82 pupils and 17 staff.

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

- How effectively does the school monitor the progress of all pupils and use this information as part of its self-evaluation and to target support to individual pupils?
- Is there greater consistency of progress than at the last inspection and is this leading to raised standards?
- Is there now a greater consistency in the quality of leadership and management across the school?

Information about the school

The school is larger than average. Most pupils are White British. An above average proportion of pupils are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds and who are learning to speak English as an additional language. A few are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. A much higher number of pupils join or leave the school other than at normal times. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.

The school has been awarded Healthy Schools status. A privately run breakfast, after-school and holiday club operates in school. This was not inspected and is subject to separate inspection arrangements. The school is currently undergoing extensive building and refurbishment

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

There has been rapid and recent improvement in the school's effectiveness. Huntingtower has developed into a good, cohesive and inclusive school. This has been the result of concerted efforts by the school's leadership team to improve the provision. Fundamental has been the outstanding work by the school's leadership team to improve the consistency of teaching. As a result, this is now good and ensures that pupils make good progress reinforced by the very close monitoring of pupils' learning and the effectiveness of the targeting and staff deployment to support those pupils who need it. The school identifies early on when pupils are in danger of slipping behind or require additional support or challenge. The school knows itself well, although its judgements are cautious. The school's self-evaluation draws effectively on a wide range of sources and data to identify its strengths and priorities for development. There is a unity of purpose among staff because they share the headteacher's commitment to improve the school. Key issues since the last inspection have been tackled well. The school has good capacity to sustain improvement. Almost all parents and carers are happy with their children's experience at the school.

Current attainment in Year 6 is broadly average, as it is across the school. Year 6 pupils are well placed to achieve well. Progress is good and consistent across the school so that pupils are building on their previous year's attainment. A very significant feature of the school is its outstanding care, guidance and support which underpin pupils' learning, foster their confidence and ensure they feel safe. Pupils with difficulties are supported extremely effectively. All pupils judge that adults in the school care about them. Pupils' personal development is good. Pupils understand the school's core values and behave well. They respect each other's backgrounds and are friendly and welcoming.

Most teaching is good and sometimes it is outstanding. These lessons are characterised by particularly challenging learning arising from open-ended opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their initiative and utilise their skills. In mathematics, there are good examples where pupils tackle 'real-life' problems, for example, analysing fictional data drawn from the Ancient Greek Olympics. However, this practice is not consistent across the school. In addition, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to make the problem set for the pupils even more memorable. On occasion too, the language used to introduce the lessons is professional in tone, rather than suitably modified for the pupils. Pupils have a good understanding of their next steps, reflected in their targets but do not always have a clear enough

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picture of how these fit into the overall bigger picture of the criteria needed to get to the next level.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards further by building on the good teaching and sharing the very best practice in the school by:
 - developing the confidence of all staff in working with pupils in open-ended tasks where pupils can demonstrate and use their initiative
 - make greater use of 'real-life' problems in mathematics
 - ensuring that problems are set in memorable ways to hook pupils' interest
 - using simpler language when explaining the objectives of the lesson and the success criteria.

- Build on pupils' good knowledge of their next step targets by ensuring that they have a clearer understanding of the ladder of criteria to reach the next level in their work and how their targets relate to it.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Data, as yet unvalidated, indicates that attainment was below average in the 2011 national tests but that the Year 6 pupils made good progress from their low starting points in Year 2. This indicates good achievement. Across the school, pupils are currently working at the level expected for their age. Pupils capable of higher attainment are challenged effectively; the proportion of Year 6 pupils gaining the higher levels in English and mathematics was not significantly different from average in 2011. There is little difference in the performance of boys and girls in classrooms.

Pupils settle to the work quickly, enjoy learning and generally present their work well, particularly in English. They develop independence in learning by being given the tools, often in the form of a mnemonic to tackle, for example, a piece of writing. They are often given the criteria to judge their learning or specific targets. Pupils are confident to give extended answers to questions because there are good opportunities to share and rehearse ideas with each other. Progress in reading is accelerating because there is a sustained focus, through group-guided reading, to develop these skills. Pupils develop a richer vocabulary because of the focus on developing 'wow' words. Almost all pupils think that they learn a lot in lessons.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because the school has high expectations for their achievement and staff are skilled at breaking their work down into small steps. In addition, there are a range of small group and one-to-one sessions led by skilled teaching and learning assistants and learning mentors. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also make

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good progress because of the formal support that they receive, including a structured approach to phonics (linking letters and sounds) and support from a bi-lingual teaching assistant, who in one session for example was discussing what the pupils were reading in their home language. In addition, classrooms provide stimulating language opportunities. Because their peers are inclusive and welcoming there are good informal language opportunities arising from playing and learning together. This also means that pupils joining the school at other than normal times are also integrated quickly and helped further by the 'buddy'/ambassador support role taken on by older pupils.

Pupils work and play together well and are secure and confident. The school fosters pupils' sense of self-worth well and they have a good understanding of right and wrong. They recognise that 'We're all good at something' and, because it is a key core school value, respect others' backgrounds. Pupils take their various responsibilities seriously. The school council in consultation with class councils influence life in school; they were, for example, involved in the design of the school. Most pupils think that the school listens to their views.

Pupils are involved in a range of school and local community events and raise money for the school and local and national charities. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of nutrition and exercise; all pupils, and almost all parents and carers think that the school helps pupils have a healthy life-style. Pupils' academic skills and personal qualities ensure that they are well prepared for the next steps in their education. One parent, whose eldest son has just moved to secondary school, stressed that he had coped with the transition extremely well. The parent wrote 'I feel that a lot of this is to do with the experiences at Huntingtower...pitch of work etc.' Almost every pupil felt the school prepared them to move to their next class. Attendance is average but improving; the figures have been depressed by holidays and extended visits to families overseas taken during term time.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	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 develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers manage their classes well. Their planning to meet the wide range of needs in their classes is rigorous and based on good knowledge of where pupils are in their learning so that there is careful match of work to needs. Teachers work effectively within teams, planning together and adopting a flexible approach to groupings to provide additional challenge and support. There is strong teamwork with teaching assistants who support pupils' learning effectively. Relationships with pupils are good and pupils respond well to adult guidance. All pupils judged that adults explain how to improve their work. Sometimes lessons were characterised by particularly good opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their initiative. On occasion, the language used to introduce lessons is over-complicated and sometimes pupils are sitting listening for too long. Resources, including the use of the interactive whiteboards, are of good quality and foster curiosity. However, a few opportunities are missed to ensure that the problem grabs pupils' attention and motivates them.

Teachers use assessment effectively to ensure pupils know what they need to do in order to improve. Marking clearly identifies what pupils have done well and points for improvement. Pupils understand their next step targets but do not have the overall big picture and so are less confident about how well they are doing. Teachers effectively foster pupils' independence skills, confidence and self-esteem.

The curriculum incorporates a good range of topics, themed to engage pupils' interest. Flexibility of approach enables staff to plan good enrichment activities to support learning as well as providing a range of contexts for key skills, in particular writing. While problems in mathematics draw on the theme to establish real-life problems in classes this is not evident in all lessons. There are a varied range of clubs and sports activities with good take-up across the year groups. There is a good focus on safety and health related issues through the personal, social and health education programme. The curriculum effectively develops pupils' awareness of other faiths and ways of life. An increasing number of parents and carers provide a variety of additional support for pupils' learning.

Staff in school show an insightful knowledge and understanding of the pupils as unique individuals, providing flexible bespoke solutions to help and support all pupils in their learning and progress. This approach is deeply embedded within the school's philosophy, staff commitment, systems and procedures. There is extensive use made of specialist agencies to support individuals. The school has recently tightened its approach to attendance and unauthorised holiday/home visits and is closely monitoring attendance by specific groups. There are already signs of rapid

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improvement in the figures.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together. Along with the senior leadership team, have made very effective use of their partnership with the local authority and another high-performing school to bring about rapid improvements, especially in relation to teaching and learning. There is a strong sense of teamwork based on a shared commitment to pupils' success amid extensive building and renovation work. Staff are open to ideas, mutually supportive, want to improve their practice and are ambitious for the pupils and the school.

Governance has improved since the last inspection. Members of the governing body have a wide range of personal and professional skills. They ensure that the school is meeting statutory requirements and pupils and staff are safe. Safeguarding as a consequence is good. There are well established partnerships with varied agencies to support children and families, as well as close teamwork underpinned by a clear framework of responsibilities. Through the committee structure and individual roles, the governing body provides support and increasing challenge. It is aware of the school's priorities, receives good information from the school and through visits and governors' subject reports has first-hand-experience of the school on which to base decisions. Procedures are systematic. There is both respect for and positive relations with staff while at the same time ensuring good accountability for pupils' outcomes. Financial planning is now secure and has given the school the financial stability to move forward.

The school's commitment to equal opportunities is strong, reflected in the drive to raise attainment of all pupils and to provide targeted support to effectively remove any barriers to learning that might exist. The school tests the impact of its commitment by careful and close analysis of the performance of specific groups. The school actively and successfully promotes community cohesion within the curriculum through clear planning. Pupils from all backgrounds get on well with each other based on respect for others' backgrounds. The school has started to develop global links, for example with a school in Australia and to a school in Nairobi through the 'Seeds for Africa' link but has yet to develop links nationally to further extend pupils' awareness of the rich diversity of society within the UK.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

There is a wide variation in entry levels to Reception, particularly in early language skills; overall attainment on entry is just below expectations for the children’s age. Children make good progress and attain broadly as expected nationally at the end of Reception with strengths in language and social skills. Children make good progress in their personal development. They play well on their own and in groups. They are given the opportunity to choose activities, fostering their independence, and are responsive to adult guidance in teaching them routines and expectations. As a result, they show positive attitudes and behave well.

Adults plan activities based on increasingly accurate assessments of children’s achievements. As a result, staff meet children’s individual needs well. The good relationships that staff have, along with the praise and encouragement that is given to children, ensures that children develop their confidence well. There is an appropriate balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Staff are skilled at interacting in children’s play and extending their learning through dialogue and questioning.

The Early Years Foundation Stage leader and her team have taken concerted action to improve the provision and tackle the issues raised in the previous report. As a result, there has been year-on-year improvement in children’s attainment. Parents and carers have highly positive views of the setting and as one parent put it, ‘Staff are very caring and nurturing.’ Safeguarding and welfare requirements are met fully. There are comprehensive induction procedures which ensure that all children, including those with specific needs, settle in quickly and well. The setting’s leadership team have an accurate picture of the strengths and areas of development and are

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focused on improving it further.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Views of parents and carers

All parents and carers judge that their children enjoy school and almost all are happy with their children’s experience at the school. A few have concerns about how the school is helping them to support their children’s learning and the school’s management of behaviour. The school publishes a range of information, including information booklets, weekly newsletters and the developing school’s website to support parents and carers and has clear plans to extend this further through specific workshops. Pupils’ behaviour in school is good because staff have a consistent positive approach.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Huntingtower Community 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 112 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 320 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	63	41	37	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	69	62	40	36	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	52	46	52	46	3	3	3	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	42	61	54	2	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	55	49	51	46	5	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	52	46	52	46	4	4	3	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	44	39	67	60	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)	46	41	58	52	3	3	2	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	48	43	56	50	3	3	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	41	55	49	4	4	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	33	66	59	3	3	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	53	47	53	47	0	0	3	3
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	65	58	42	38	2	2	2	2

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).

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"> ■ 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 pupils' 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.



10 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Huntingtower Community Primary School, Grantham, NG31 7AU

Thank you for making us so welcome in your school. I would like to thank in particular those of you who gave up part of your lunchtime to talk to us. What you had to say was very interesting and helpful in gaining a picture of your school.

This is a good school. You make good progress, achieve well and your behaviour is good. You help make it a friendly school because you respect each other. You clearly understand the school's values and what 'REACH' means. You told us you enjoy school because you do lots of interesting things, and I agree with you. Adults care about you a great deal and provide outstanding support to help you overcome any difficulties that you might have. This also means that you feel safe and grow in confidence.

You have skilled teachers and they keep a very close eye on the progress that you are all making and are quick to see how they can give you more help. I asked the headteacher to work with your teachers on a number of things to help you all to make even better progress. These are: to explain more simply what the lesson is about and how you can judge how effectively you are learning; to provide you with more opportunities where you can use your initiative and show how clever you are, and in mathematics, to use 'real-life' problems. In addition, while you all know your targets very well, you are not so clear how these next steps fit into the bigger picture to move to the next level. I asked the staff to clarify for you this ladder of progress.

You told me that you think the headteacher and staff are doing a good job. I agree with you. Between them they have ensured that the school has made rapid improvement. What is also important is that all staff share the ambition for the school to go on improving. You all have a clear part to play in that process by making sure you attend school, continue to work hard, not only in your work but also to ensure that the school continues to be a very friendly place and that you take every opportunity to gain from the experiences that the school provides.

Yours sincerely

Roderick Passant
Lead inspector

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