

Huntingdon Primary School

Ambury Road, Huntingdon, PE29 1AD

Inspection dates 22–23 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The school has made good progress since its previous inspection. Pupils achieve well and standards are rising rapidly.
- Current standards are in line with the national average by the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress.
- Teaching is consistently good and has improved considerably. The school is alive with colourful high quality displays.
- Pupils take a real pride in their work and present it very neatly in all subjects.
- Teaching assistants are trained extremely well and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- Good team work in the Early Years Foundation Stage means that children get off to a strong start in Reception.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They have extremely positive attitudes to learning and show great respect for one another and adults.
- Pupils say they feel very safe at school and have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe.
- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has forged a strong team that has been successful in driving improvement.
- Governors know the school's strengths and areas to develop well and provide a good level of support and challenge to senior leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- At times the more-able pupils are given work to do that is too easy for them.
- The quality of marking in mathematics is not as strong as that in writing.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 35 lessons or parts of lessons, including some jointly with the headteacher.
- Members of the inspection team heard pupils read and, with the headteacher, looked closely at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including development plans, policies, self-evaluation reports, monitoring files, safeguarding and subject materials, evidence of the school's partnership work and information for families.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils chosen at random. Discussions were held with senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and other staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors. Telephone conversations were held with a representative from the local authority and a consultant who has been supporting the school.
- The inspectors noted 18 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke informally to parents in the playground. They also considered the school's own survey of parental views.
- The inspectors considered the 40 staff questionnaires that were completed.

Inspection team

Nick Butt, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christine Lake

Additional Inspector

Kathleen Yates

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. It is growing to have three forms of entry in every year group. At present, this is the case in Reception.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is average.
- Many more pupils than is usual join and leave the school part way through their school careers.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which in this school provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals) is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs, is average.
- The school has established links with Hemingford Grey Primary and the Cambridge Faculty of Education.
- The school runs its own training arm called the 'Development Centre' which organises training for its own staff and staff from other schools in the region.
- In 2013, the school met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment by the end of Key Stage 2.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure all more-able pupils are given sufficiently demanding work to do.
- Improve the quality of marking in mathematics to match that of writing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the school with skills well below those typically found, especially in language and communication and personal and social development. They make good progress in Reception, leaving with standards that are a little below average. There is a wide range of stimulating activities for children to enjoy that focus on developing their basic skills.
- Changes to the way phonics (the sounds that letters make) is taught are proving effective. While the proportion of Year 1 pupils who met the required standard in the national reading check rose substantially in 2013, it was still below average. The current Year 1 pupils are doing much better.
- In 2013 standards by the end of Year 2 were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. This year group had an unsettled time in both Reception and Year 1 because of staffing changes and this slowed their progress. However, these pupils have made very rapid progress this year in Year 3 and their attainment is currently in line with national expectations in reading and mathematics and a little below in writing.
- The current Year 2 pupils have benefited from improved teaching and most are reaching average levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress from their low starting points.
- Year 6 pupils in 2013 made good progress, but began the year with well below expected levels of attainment. This year group had experienced weaker teaching earlier in their school careers and brought with them a legacy of underachievement. By the end of the year good teaching had caused their attainment to rise so that it was below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Many pupils who have benefited from the school's provision leave before their achievement can be recorded in the national tests in Year 6. Conversely, pupils who join the school later often come with needs that the school can only support for a short while before they leave, resulting in attainment that is not as strong.
- The current Year 6 have made good progress this year and are working at broadly average levels of attainment. The proportion of pupils making expected progress over Key Stage 2 is greatly up on last year and compares favourably with the 2013 national figures. An increasing proportion of pupils are doing even better.
- Across the school pupils have made good progress this year and it is accelerating. This is because teaching has improved greatly and is now consistently good. Previous gaps in pupils' attainment have closed.
- Achievement in writing has improved because there has been a real focus on developing pupils' spelling and grammar. An innovative system to help pupils construct sentences has had a positive impact and pupils are much more confident about writing at length. This is evident in their 'theme folders' where there are lively and well-written examples linked to pupils' topics.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics because teachers have benefited from high quality training, including helping pupils to use and apply what they know and in asking probing mathematical questions. Teachers have also undertaken research with the National Centre for the Excellence of Teaching in Mathematics and this has raised the quality of their practice.

- The school identified that its approach to the teaching of reading was not as effective as it would like and so introduced new measures which included using quality literature and developing pupils' skills in inference and deduction. This has led to a good improvement in pupils' ability to understand text. An online reading programme also encourages pupils to read widely and reflect upon their reading.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well because of the valuable support they receive. Their needs are identified early and there are very strong links with parents and outside agencies.
- Gaps in attainment between pupils supported by the pupil premium and others in the school have been closing rapidly because the additional funding is spent well on raising pupils' achievement. For example, a tutor in mathematics worked with pupils in small groups and this helped them to grow in confidence and make good progress.
- In 2013 eligible pupils did better than their peers in reading, writing, grammar, punctuation and spelling. They were one-and-a-half terms behind the others in mathematics. Across the school, pupils supported by the pupil premium achieve well, because their needs are carefully identified and their progress is closely tracked.
- While most more-able pupils achieve well, at times some of them are not given sufficiently demanding work to do and this slows their progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Excellent relationships between pupils and staff motivate pupils to learn well. Consistently good teaching enables pupils to make rapid progress. High quality support from teaching assistants, who are trained very well and fully included in the work of the classroom, helps all pupils to thrive.
- Teachers all have high expectations and good subject knowledge. This makes them confident and enables them to inspire good quality work from pupils. For example, Year 3 planned letters to persuade the authorities to save an island under environmental threat.
- The school gives pupils a wide range of appropriate homework, which motivates them to produce high quality projects, including some excellent models. Displays of pupils' work around the school celebrate excellence and are of the highest quality, creating a colourful and stimulating atmosphere. This, combined with a building maintained to the highest standards, makes the school an inviting place to work and play.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs benefit from a variety of support tailored to their needs. The school's purpose-built sensory room provides a calm and soothing environment for pupils.
- Books show that pupils have made good progress over time. There is a wide range of good quality work, not only in English and mathematics, but also in science and 'theme folders'.
- Marking is consistent across all classes and all subjects, but it is often stronger in writing than in mathematics. Pupils enter into a dialogue with their teachers in their writing books and almost always act upon the helpful advice they receive to improve their work. In mathematics, pupils are given less indication of what they could do next to improve.

- Children settle quickly in Reception because staff work very well together. Children sustain concentration when undertaking the many purposeful tasks and are encouraged to speak about what they are learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They have extremely positive attitudes to learning, and listen very attentively in class. Pupils take a real pride in their work. This is reflected in the very neat work in books and 'theme folders'.
- Pupils' behaviour around school is excellent. They show great respect to one another and to adults. They enjoy taking on responsibility as members of the school and eco council, and as 'champions' in learning, sports and behaviour. Pupils also act as 'peer mediators', resolving minor disputes among their peers without adult help.
- Pupils have fully adopted the school's five values of courage, pride, resilience, respect and team work, which they had a say in formulating. They recognise these qualities in their schoolmates and they are celebrated during achievement assemblies.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and have an excellent understanding of how to keep safe, for example when using the internet. They say that bullying is not an issue for them, but know all about the different types of bullying such as cyber bullying.
- Pupils say, 'Lessons are fun. They make you want to come to school.' Since the previous inspection punctuality has improved greatly and attendance has risen to become broadly average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's inspirational leadership is the catalyst which has brought together the whole school community and driven improvements successfully. She has built a strong leadership team.
- An unrelenting focus on improving teaching means that all teachers have personal improvement plans and know exactly what they need to be focusing on to improve their practice.
- The innovative and entrepreneurial 'Development Centre' brings high quality training to the school cost effectively and ensures that all staff benefit. Rigorous procedures check how well teachers are doing and give clear feedback. Teachers are expected to reflect on any training they have had and explain how it will improve their practice.
- Teachers are held to account through regular meetings to consider pupils' progress, which identify promptly any pupils at risk of falling behind and determine what will be done to help them catch up. Teachers are set demanding targets for managing their performance and are not given a pay rise unless the success of their work merits it.
- The school has done much to eliminate inadequate teaching and has ensured that teaching is now consistently good. Pupils are achieving well and standards are rising rapidly. However, it is too soon to see this good progress reflected in the end of year results.

- Key subject and other leaders have a good knowledge of their areas and keep a careful eye on how well pupils are doing. They can identify what is working well and what could be improved further. The school is in the process of appointing phase leaders as part of managing its growth to three forms of entry.
- The school teaches a stimulating and relevant range of subjects and topics, which pupils enjoy. Much thought goes into making them exciting and purposeful. Every opportunity is taken for pupils to use their English and mathematics skills in different subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils wrote letters of application to become a Victorian house maid.
- Pupils benefit from many visits, visitors and clubs, including residential visits. These have included a workshop from a Shakespearian actor and contribute well to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All pupils are fully included and given equal opportunities to succeed. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The school is spending its sports premium on a gymnastics coach to work alongside teachers and an athletics coach. Following consultation with pupils, table tennis has been introduced. Pupils are participating more widely in sport, teachers are more confident in teaching physical education and there are increasing benefits to pupils' health and well-being.
- Low-key support from the local authority recognises the fact that the school sources the support it needs from a range of providers, including external consultants. The impact of the 'Development Centre', and productive links with Hemingford Grey Primary and the Cambridge Faculty of Education, gives staff a rich diet of training to support their teaching.
- Parents are increasingly positive about the work of the school, although some historical stigma remains. Most parents would recommend the school to their friends.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very knowledgeable about the school's performance and the quality of teaching. There are good systems in place for governors to find out first-hand how well the school is doing. This equips them to ask searching questions of school leaders. They make sure that taxing targets are set for teachers and that there is a clear impact from the additional spending of the pupil premium and sports premium. Governors ensure that all safeguarding arrangements meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	135568
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	442081

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	409
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jane Gedny
Headteacher	Elaine Lynch
Date of previous school inspection	20 February 2013
Telephone number	01480 375113
Fax number	01480 375114
Email address	office@huntingdonprimary.cambs.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

