



Huntington Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 124088
LEA Staffordshire
Inspection number 281627
Inspection dates 28 February 2006 to 1 March 2006
Reporting inspector Doris Bell AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Stafford Road
School category	Community		Cannock
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Staffordshire WS12 4PD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01543 510260
Number on roll	302	Fax number	01543 510263
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr John Crump
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2001	Headteacher	Ms Clare Robertson

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school, which has its own Nursery, serves a socially deprived area of Stafford. A higher-than-average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities and attainment on entry to the school is below average. Only a very small number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds and none are at the early stages of learning English. The school operates on a split site and provides before and after school care. At present the school does not have a deputy headteacher. An assistant headteacher was appointed in the week prior to the inspection.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement for the school.

This school is not effective because pupils do not achieve well enough and standards are too low. Standards and the quality of education, including the quality of teaching, are good in the Foundation Stage but inadequate in the rest of the school. Teachers' expectations are too low and there are weaknesses in planning, marking and assessment.

By the end of Year 2, standards are exceptionally low and have been so for a number of years. The same is true of standards in English at the end of Year 6, and basic literacy skills are not taught or reinforced well enough in other subjects. The school mistakenly judges itself to be good because older pupils' overall progress improved in 2005. Satisfactory achievement in mathematics and good achievement in science in 2005 masked significant under-achievement in English. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress. Behaviour is mostly good and because pupils enjoy school, their attendance is improving. They are well cared for, guided and supported in relation to their personal development and well-being.

Leadership and management are inadequate. The headteacher provides clear direction for the school's work but this is not being followed by all staff. The many initiatives introduced to improve learning are limited in their usefulness and impact. They have not improved standards and achievement and there is a lack of rigour and clarity in the school's systems for checking the effectiveness of its work. Improvement in the key issues identified at the last inspection is satisfactory. However, the quality of teaching has deteriorated and the continued decline in standards over time demonstrates that the school lacks the capacity to turn things round. It does not provide adequate value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in Years 1 and 2 by improving the quality of teaching and building on what pupils have learned in the Foundation Stage.
- Accelerate achievement and raise standards in English throughout the school by raising teachers' expectations, sharpening marking and assessment and using the information properly in planning.
- Establish more rigorous systems for checking and improving teaching and learning, clarify what is being checked and why and take robust action to tackle weaknesses where they occur.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Weaknesses in the quality of teaching have led to inadequate achievement and exceptionally low standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 and in English by the end of Year 6. Standards in both of these areas have shown a steady decline since 2003 and overall since 2001, when the school was last inspected. This has happened despite children making good progress in the Foundation Stage and reaching standards that are broadly average by the end of Reception. Progress is inadequate in Years 1 and 2 because staff do not build well enough on what children have learned in the Foundation Stage. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress towards their targets because they are supported well.

Achievement is satisfactory in mathematics, although standards are still significantly below average. In science, pupils achieved well last year, and standards were average. The school has successfully raised achievement in both of these subjects. Nevertheless, it did not meet its statutory targets in 2005 and it is not on course to meet those for 2006. This is because of weaknesses in grammar, spelling and punctuation, and pupils having too few opportunities to write at length or independently. The school tracks pupils' progress adequately but does not act on the findings. The data shows that too few pupils make the expected progress between Year 1 and Year 6, although most pupils begin to pick up in Year 5.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being are sound in all age groups, with a number of strong features. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance, which is satisfactory, is improving. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils support each other well, for example, keeping a careful lookout for anyone who might be lonely or upset in the playground. The pupils commented that they find most lessons fun and that they like and trust their teachers and the other adults who work with them. The behaviour of most pupils is good. However, a few boys do not follow agreed rules and, for example, by calling out in class, they limit thinking time for others.

Pupils understand the importance of eating healthily and keeping themselves healthy, for example, through exercise. They have a good understanding of safety issues, learn to be part of a community, and eagerly accept responsibility, for example, as school councillors. However, their inadequate literacy skills mean they are not prepared well enough for life beyond school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Although the overall quality of teaching is inadequate, effective teaching in the Foundation Stage gives the children a good start in their education. Foundation Stage staff plan well to meet the children's needs, building effectively on what has gone before. In the rest of the school, pupils' work is not planned well enough and there is very little difference in the work given to pupils of different ability levels. Sometimes work is pitched at the wrong level or is inappropriate to the pupils' different stages of learning. For example, in a Year 1 and 2 lesson, pupils made very little progress because the words to which they were required to add prefixes were much too difficult for them. However, throughout the school, teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, helping them to make satisfactory progress towards their targets.

The marking of pupils' work is poor. It rarely shows pupils how to improve and sometimes work is not marked for considerable periods of time. Pupils greatly appreciate the help they receive when the headteacher marks their work, which she occasionally does as a way of showing teachers good practice. Pupils' progress is tracked and tests are analysed, but the information gained is not used well enough in planning. Pupils' targets are of limited use because there are too few opportunities for pupils and teachers to work together to decide whether the targets have been achieved. Too often, pupils are left to determine this amongst themselves. They do not realise that they can meet their targets in different subjects because teachers do not make this explicit to them. This further hinders their learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

A satisfactory curriculum, extended and enriched by a good range of well-attended extra-curricular activities, covers all aspects of pupils' learning. Curricular provision is good in the Foundation Stage. In the rest of the school, the blocks of time allocated to different subjects successfully increase pupils' depth of understanding in subjects other than English and mathematics. However, pupils' continuous progress is not well enough planned for or checked in all subjects. Information and communication technology skills are developed satisfactorily and opportunities to promote literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects are identified. Teachers, though, do not insist or check that pupils use and apply what they have learned in literacy, for example, to write correctly, with accurate spelling, punctuation and grammar. There are few opportunities for extended writing in English or other subjects and overall, the range of writing taught is too narrow. These weaknesses contribute to the low standards in English.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good relationships evident between pupils and adults throughout the school are the direct result of the good personal care, support and guidance given to all pupils. All adults know the pupils well and are alert to their concerns. Pupils are confident that they have an adult to turn to if they are worried, secure in the knowledge that they will be listened to. Child protection and health and safety procedures are good, as are the arrangements for children when they start at the school in the Foundation Stage. Here, workshops and half-termly newsletters help parents to understand how to help their children to succeed in learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who are at risk are identified early and supported effectively. Parents and pupils are very appreciative of the school's work in these areas. However, the academic guidance provided for pupils is much less secure because teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate. Despite recognising the situation some time ago, the school has not taken rigorous steps to halt the decline in standards and achievement. Therefore it does not demonstrate the capacity to improve.

The headteacher has a clear understanding of the issues facing the school. She has successfully improved key areas of its work that were identified as weak at the last inspection. The Foundation Stage is now well led and managed. Provision there, and for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, is much better, as is the atmosphere in the school, the pupils' behaviour and attendance, and their willingness to learn. However, the initiatives introduced to improve learning, such as 'Brain Gym' and building learning power, have not been fully and effectively implemented. The things that go with them in order to raise achievement, such as effective marking and the use of assessment information in planning, are inadequate. The school's evaluation of itself is too generous. It focuses only on the areas in which improvement has taken place and does not consider whether those improvements are raising standards by accelerating pupils' progress.

During checks on teaching and learning, the headteacher accurately pinpoints major strengths and weaknesses. Crucially, however, leaders and managers have not tackled the weaknesses with sufficient rigour and issues are not always followed up. The school development plan has sensible priorities but they are not being pursued consistently or rigorously enough to raise standards systematically throughout the school. Governors are supportive and keen for the school to succeed but they do not challenge it sufficiently about the low standards and unsatisfactory progress.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	No	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	No
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for welcoming us to your school and sharing with us your views of it and of how you learn. We found that there are some good things about your school but that it has some important areas to improve and that it will need extra help to enable it to do this as quickly as possible.

We liked these things most of all:

Most of you behave well and are eager to learn. You get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception, and most of you enjoy your lessons.

You clearly want to make the school better and are eager to become involved in doing this, for example, as school councillors.

You are well cared for. You know that staff listen to your concerns and want to help you, and you are willing to help each other.

These are the things we have asked your school to work on now:

Helping those of you who are in Years 1 and 2 to do much better in reading, writing and mathematics.

Helping every pupil in the school to make much better progress in English by making teaching, and therefore your learning, better than they are now.

Keeping a very close check on how well your teachers teach and plan your lessons in order to make sure that you always make as much progress as possible.

We hope you will all achieve much more as a result of the school making these improvements and that you will enjoy learning throughout your lives.