



# Huntingdon Nursery School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 110598  
**Local Authority** CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
**Inspection number** 288716  
**Inspection date** 24 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Joanne Harvey

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>	Nursery	<b>School address</b>	Ambury Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Huntingdon
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-5		Cambridgeshire PE29 1AD
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01480375216
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	119	<b>Fax number</b>	01480375217
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Hazel Kenyon
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Kay Dimelow
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2001		

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## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector in one day.

## **Description of the school**

This is the largest nursery school in the county, serving a socially and culturally mixed catchment area of Huntingdon and its outlying villages. This includes an area of very high social deprivation. Higher than average proportions of children are in the early stages of acquiring English or are entitled to claim free school meals. Similarly, there is a high percentage with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and statements of special educational need. There is a Hearing Impaired Unit on the school site and the school has designated Children's Centre status, Healthy Schools Status, an Investor in People Award and a National Association of Advisors for Computers in Education (NAACE) award for information and communication technology (ICT).

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

This is an outstanding and highly effective nursery school giving excellent value for money. It was considered to be a very effective school at the time of the last inspection and it has continued to flourish and develop since then. The school's success arises from vigorous and highly effective leadership by an outstanding headteacher, supported by her governors and an able and hardworking staff team who together ensure the needs of children and their families are at the centre of all that they do. They really do achieve their stated aim; to go 'the extra mile for the family and the children'. Each individual is valued in this nurturing but challenging environment. Therefore children thrive and become very well rounded individuals. As a result, they progress rapidly, often from very low starting points, to reach and often surpass the standards expected for their age.

This is certainly a very happy and harmonious school. The school successfully lays the groundwork to develop children's basic skills and their understanding of the world. Because children are encouraged to express their opinions and to accept increasing responsibilities, they grow in confidence and their personal development is outstanding. This equips children exceptionally well for the next stage of their education and the choices they will have to make about their lives. It is no surprise therefore that parents and children are unanimous in their praise for the school. One parent wrote: 'It is the most brilliant, exciting, inviting place to send your child'.

Teaching and learning are excellent because teachers carefully plan lessons which take children's learning forward from whatever level they have reached previously. They involve structured or play activities which are stimulating and enjoyable, involve children fully in their own learning, and develop very positive attitudes. Those who find learning difficult and those who are in the early stages of learning English get outstanding support so that they make excellent progress.

The impact of leadership and management is outstanding because the headteacher tirelessly employs rigorous procedures for checking the work of the school and how well children are progressing. She ensures a shared understanding of the school's performance and a commitment to continuous improvement from all staff so that, good as the school is, there is no complacency. However, the new senior leadership team are not yet fully involved in evaluating the work of the school and leading school improvement. The success the school has had in the past and its determination to do even better means that the capacity for sustained and future improvement is great.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Share the leadership and management of the school to ensure senior leaders other than the headteacher play a full role in school self-evaluation and improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Children achieve extremely well. When they start at the nursery, children have much lower levels of knowledge, skills and understanding than most pupils of their age. Aspects of their English and mathematics skills are particularly low. The school has a proven track record of ensuring that children consistently make at least good progress in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum and in many areas they make extremely good progress. Consequently, by the time they leave the nursery, they have caught up with other children of a similar age and some have passed them. Children who are in the early stages of learning English and those who have a learning difficulty and/or disability also make exceptionally good progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development is outstanding. Children's happiness and enjoyment is in no doubt. When asked about what they liked at school, children listed everything that they do, inside and outside. This positive attitude begins from the moment they start at the nursery where freedom to learn is extremely well promoted, as are spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Care is taken to help children think positively about themselves, others in school and people from other cultures; as a result children show respect for themselves and for others. They learn to share, take turns, to cope with their emotions and develop a good sense of right and wrong. Lunchtimes are also a joy when during family service behaviour is exemplary and conversations flow. Early on, children develop independence and confidence to make choices. This prepares them well for their lives in and out of school both now and in the future. Children develop a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles because of the school's keen involvement in the Healthy Schools Award, Snazzy Snacks and helping in the vegetable garden.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

Teaching here is outstanding. Very good relationships underpin a supportive yet challenging learning environment. Adults have high expectations of children so that they are attentive, rarely passive and respond quickly to instructions. Stimulating lessons contribute significantly to children making extremely good progress. Assessment information is used most effectively to plan work that challenges pupils of all abilities. Teachers understand that children learn in different ways and provide a variety of tasks which motivate and encourage them. This includes good use of computer based learning. The children enjoy investigating and solving problems for themselves. They are having so much fun they do not realise that adults' incisive questioning challenges

them to really think and work hard. Teaching assistants have full involvement in planning and assessment across school and very effectively support those children who have additional learning needs; as a result these children make excellent progress.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. Great care is taken to ensure a beguiling range of well resourced activities which simulate, promote and develop children's learning. The indoor and outdoor activities and resources inspire a sense of awe and wonder in the children and provide exciting and challenging new ways for them to learn. All activities, either teacher-led or based on play, ensure that all areas of learning are covered well and are enriched in many ways. Singing, circle and story times extend children's vocabulary, their physical skills and promote a real love of learning. Good use is made of the local environment such as a local bus and train ride and trips to the local park. Visitors to the school add creative arts experiences. These activities support learning in all areas of the curriculum, help children discover their talents and develop important personal skills which will help them when they are older.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

Standards of care are outstanding. Staff get to know children and families very well and are extremely quick to respond to any worries. Great emphasis is placed on the personal, social and emotional development of each child. Therefore children separate well from their carers and settle in to nursery life very quickly. Children who have learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported and do well. Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are very thorough. Systems for measuring how well children are progressing are extremely rigorous. Teachers know exactly what the next stages of learning are and Plan/Do/Review sessions are used exceptionally well to share with children what they should be learning next and how they should do this.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

Leadership and management are outstanding. There is a proven track record of maintaining standards whilst continuing to make improvements, giving every confidence that the school can develop still further from here. The head teacher provides an outstanding role model for all members of the school community. She has created a hardworking team who are united in their aim to provide the highest quality education in an atmosphere where everyone feels happy, valued, cared for and respected. Teamwork is paramount, as seen for example in the excellent and varied contribution made by teaching assistants and key workers to the school as a whole.

Excellent systems collect detailed information about how well all children are doing. Therefore resources are well focused and response to changing needs is quick.

Governors have a clear understanding of the school and its development but senior leaders are not taking a full role in leading school improvement.

The excellent condition of the building, environment and resources arise from the astute management. Tireless work to promote partnerships which enhance the children's experiences have resulted not only in Children's Centre Status but also appreciative parents who take advantage of the many learning opportunities available to them including Chattersacks, Family Talk and Raising Children courses.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

25 January 2007

Dear Children

Huntingdon Nursery School, Ambury Road, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE29 1AD

Thank you for making me so welcome when I came to inspect your nursery recently. This letter is to tell you what I thought about it.

I think you are very lucky to go to such a wonderful nursery school. I saw you having so much fun and doing lots of exciting things. You are very well behaved and everyone gets on so well together. I saw you all working and playing hard in classes, having lunch together quietly and sensibly and playing and working outside too. Because all the grown ups work very hard and look after you so well you not only do very well with your learning you become very nice people too!

Everyone at nursery is very keen to make it as good as it can be. So, to make the nursery even better I have asked the headteacher to let the new leaders of the nursery help her with the job of finding out about how well the nursery is doing and leading the work that needs to be done to make it better still.

I am sure Mrs Dimelow and the other staff will continue to work hard to make the school an exciting and interesting place for you and you can do your bit by continuing with your excellent behaviour and hard work.

Joanne Harvey Lead Inspector