

Huntington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124088
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	302575
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	David Collard

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	269
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Round
Headteacher	Lynn Small
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2006
School address	Stafford Road Huntington Cannock WS12 4PD
Telephone number	01543 510260
Fax number	01543 510263

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Huntington is an average sized primary school on two sites. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is slightly above the national average, although the number with statements of special educational need is low. The school was judged to require special measures at its previous inspection because the quality of education was inadequate. Since then a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed. Prior to this inspection, there have been three monitoring visits. The school is due to move into new buildings in September 2009.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. This is because the school now provides a good quality of education. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils behave well, take an interest in what they are doing, and are proud of what they have achieved. This is as a result of the strong direction provided by the highly respected headteacher who has provided the whole school community with a common sense of purpose. Teaching is now good because developments have been carefully focused on the past variability in the Nursery, Reception and Key Stage 1 classes. Whilst there is still more to be done, the school now ensures that pupils now make a solid start to their education. This, combined with the consistently good teaching at the upper end of the school, means that pupils achieve well by the time they leave in Year 6 and are well prepared for their future.

Most children start school with standards that are below those expected for their age. The satisfactory provision and adequate progress through the Foundation Stage means they enter Year 1 ready for more formal work. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 1 although, by the end of Year 2, standards are still below average. Nevertheless, in national tests, results are beginning to show an upward trend due to the better focus on pupils' individual needs. For instance, in the mixed Years 1 and 2 class, pupils are being provided with the right basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics which they had missed out on in the past. Standards by the end of Year 6 are average. However, progress is more rapid through these junior years because teaching is consistently good and some is of particularly high quality. The school's very good tracking of these pupils shows that nearly all have made at least the expected levels of progress and a good proportion have done significantly better. This tracking, added to the careful attention to health and safety, means that the care, guidance and support of pupils are good.

There has rightly been a concerted effort to improve basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. As these have started to rise, so the school has started to focus on widening pupils' experiences through more exciting and stimulating lessons. The curriculum is presently satisfactory. The school has begun to trial the linking of subjects together to enliven pupils' experiences, enable them to apply their basic skills in a range of different situations, and help them to think more for themselves. However, this is not common throughout the school.

The good leadership and management are evident throughout both the senior and middle management team. The headteacher has used the expertise of the local authority well to raise the aspirations and expectations of what the pupils can achieve. Consequently, crucial improvements have been made in the areas that will make the most difference. The governors, many of whom are new to their roles, have developed their effectiveness well, particularly in the recent past. They are now provided with accurate information that they evaluate from their own observations and are using this to ensure that improvements are monitored and challenged. The school's good evaluation of its own performance, combined with challenging targets for future developments, demonstrates its good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 to ensure standards rise in reading, writing and mathematics.

- Develop the curriculum to extend pupils understanding of how they can use their basic skills more effectively within other subjects and so start thinking more for themselves.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Whilst achievement by the end of Year 6 is good, some variability is evident in individual classes. Nevertheless, the progress of all pupils has greatly improved in the last eighteen months. The school's rigorous tracking of termly progress shows that, in a number of classes, pupils are making up to two years progress in a single year.

Children in the Foundation Stage are making adequate progress. This is better in the Reception class, where the teachers have focused well on providing the right challenges to develop social, communication, language and mathematical skills. Some legacy of weaker teaching in the past has been addressed in Years 1 and 2. Good support is provided in these years, particularly for those with learning difficulties, and so progress is sound and improving, even though this has yet to be fully reflected in national tests.

Progress is at its best in Years 4 to 6. Here the stronger teaching is reflected in a higher number of pupils reaching at least the national average level in tests and approximately a quarter achieving above this. This represents good progress from when these pupils were in Year 2. The school's determination to improve the progress of all pupils can be seen in the very challenging targets that have been set, particularly in Year 2.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

By Year 6, pupils grow into sensible and mature young people, highly responsible, and capable of taking on specific roles. For example, school councillors have been instrumental in bringing about a number of improvements and are committed to improving things further. All pupils make a significant contribution to creating an orderly and purposeful learning environment. They mostly adopt safe practices, although at times younger pupils are rather boisterous. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy living, especially the merits of choosing a balanced diet. They appreciate the opportunities the school gives them to engage in physical activities during and after school. They talk about 'Wake-Up, Shake-Up' as being good for the brain. Pupils feel happy, safe and comfortable in school and confirm that bullying is almost non-existent. Punctuality is good and attendance has risen significantly to the national average in just one year. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils gain self confidence and self worth, they work well in teams as well as independently, and they have a sound understanding of their own, and other, cultures.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

All teachers are committed to improving the opportunities for pupils. Planning has improved and provides challenging opportunities for all ability levels. Typically, expectations about what pupils can achieve are good. As a result, pupils are provided with consistently challenging opportunities in each of their lessons.

The physical distance between the Nursery and the Reception classes caused problems in the past and working relationships were difficult. However, better organisation means that pupils and teachers in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 now move about more freely so that expertise can be shared. Some teaching in Key Stage 2 is exemplary. In these lessons, there is a combination of exciting and relevant activities while pupils reinforce specific subject skills. For instance, in one lesson a courtroom had been set up. Pupils were improving their writing, speaking and listening as well as using computers and research. At present, this imaginative approach is not universal and too dependent on the expertise of the teacher.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

All subjects are taught on a weekly basis with good provision throughout the school for physical education and personal, social and health education. This impacts well on pupils' understanding, their personal development, and adoption of healthy lifestyles. Literacy and numeracy have had a high priority and this has led to often rapid progress. However, there is still too much reliance on individual teachers' creativity. The school rightly feels that it is time to raise the quality of the whole school's planning to ensure that it is being linked to key skills that are built upon each year. Pupils say they like the extra-curricular activities they are given and many take part in the good number of after school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Staff know the pupils well. The satisfactory safeguarding systems and procedures have been strengthened considerably over the last year. Problems are dealt with quickly and effectively so they do not become major issues. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure, knowing they can turn to any adult for help. Where attendance has been an issue, close family support has been offered both by the school and from outside agencies. The lunchtime 'Captain's Table' has been a good example of how pupils are encouraged to take responsibility. Here they are expected to behave impeccably whilst eating and to be responsible for laying and clearing up the dinners.

Academic guidance is very good. Pupils are given good advice about how to improve their work, although this is stronger in the Key Stage 2 classes. The tracking of individual pupils' progress is comprehensive and is closely monitored. Pupils and teachers are held to account and are expected to explain any variations.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher quickly gained the respect of staff, pupils and parents. She has high expectations about what the pupils should be achieving and has put in place the right systems to ensure this happens. The strong senior leadership team has developed and implemented innovative ideas, such as those for the revised curriculum. All this has meant that staff have a coherent, long-term plan and are clear about what is expected of them. Policies and procedures have been strengthened and systems to support pupils have been improved. Consequently, whilst the school is aware that more needs to be done, the provision is much more consistent, pupils' progress has improved, and standards are starting to rise. The governing body has undergone many changes since the last inspection. All statutory requirements are met and the

school is increasingly being held to account. Nevertheless, much of this has happened recently. Many of the governors are new to their role and so are still developing their own levels of expertise.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Huntington Primary School, Huntington, WS12 4PD

Thank you for looking after me so well during all the visits I have made to your school. I have very much enjoyed meeting you all and sharing some of the work you have been doing. I am sure you will be pleased to know that we feel that your school is no longer in 'special measures' because you are getting a good quality of education. This means that the many improvements have helped make your school a better place. I have included the main points of the report below.

- Many of you have told me how much better your school is. You are right. We could see that you are all working much harder and making good progress by the time you leave in Year 6. However, standards could still be higher in Year 2.
- We have said that teaching is good. Your teachers have worked hard to give you more challenging work and they have succeeded. There is still some more to do, particularly for those of you in younger classes. However, things have greatly improved throughout the school.
- The attendance has improved this year. You need to make sure you come to school regularly because there are lots of exciting things planned for the future.
- You told us that you were looked after well. Again we agree. Your teachers make sure they know when there are problems so that they can be dealt with quickly. As a result, we think your behaviour is good and can see that you enjoy school a lot.
- Your teachers feel that the time is right to start thinking about doing some more exciting things in different subjects. We saw this starting to happen and with the new planning that has been started there should be further improvement after the summer.
- Your headteacher, along with the good support from all the other staff, has worked hard to improve your school. She has a lot planned for the future to continue this process so you will need to work really hard to make it all happen.

Finally, it has been good to see how much you have all improved since I started visiting last year. I am confident that you will all play your part in making sure that your school becomes one of the best. Good luck for the future!

Yours sincerely

David Collard Lead Inspector