

Hunts Cross Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104549
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	308625
Inspection dates	3–4 April 2008
Reporting inspector	David Halford

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 on roll	
School	257
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev J Durham
Headteacher	Mrs J Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2004
School address	Kingsthorpe Road Liverpool Merseyside L25 0PJ
Telephone number	151 4861777
Fax number	151 4481245

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The school was inspected by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average-sized primary school serves an area of some economic disadvantage. It is situated close to the local authority boundary and some pupils travel from outside its immediate vicinity. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is well below average, and none are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. A new Children's Centre is under construction on the school site. In recent years the reorganisation of schools in the neighbouring local authority has resulted in additional numbers of pupils being admitted between key stages and there have been significant changes in teaching staff. The school holds the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Dyslexia Charter Mark, the Activemark, ArtsMark, a Healthy Schools Award and the Financial Management Standards for Schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education overall. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and enhanced well by the school's programme of performing arts and outstanding choral singing. The school has a caring and positive ethos and works well with outside agencies to support this. Parents' views are summed up by comments such as, 'My child enjoys school and works well. Hunts Cross is a school with a positive atmosphere that makes everyone feel included.'

Children begin the Reception Year with standards which vary widely, but are generally as expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress overall and the majority transfer to Year 1 with broadly average skills. Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2 many are achieving above average standards. In Key Stage 2 progress is more uneven and there has, in recent years, been some underachievement. However, the school has sought to address this, particularly in pupils' writing. There have been improvements in pupils' sentence construction, spelling and punctuation. Current standards, in Year 6, are about average with slightly higher attainment in English. Standards in mathematics could be higher. Achievement is satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 2, but progress could be even better, in Years 3 to 6, in mathematics. Teaching and learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. Some teaching is good but there are inconsistencies in quality, which has contributed to the uneven progress in the recent past. The newly established assessment systems provide good information for teachers to use to plan more appropriate work for pupils. This information, however, is not yet being fully utilised to ensure all pupils are sufficiently challenged. The marking of pupils' work has good features and informs pupils how they can improve their work. Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Whilst subject leaders are knowledgeable and undertake a significant range of monitoring activities the outcomes of this have yet to impact sufficiently on the effectiveness of teaching and learning in their subjects. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve and provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage (Reception) is satisfactory and children make satisfactory progress. On entry to the Reception children's skills are broadly as expected for their age. Levels of learning at the end of Reception in 2007 were broadly in line with national expectations and were fairly typical for the school. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teacher led activities usually have a clear focus and adults keep children engaged and interested in their learning. This is particularly the case for teaching aspects of communication and language development. The curriculum is satisfactory but activities are not planned sufficiently well to take account of children's previous development across all the areas of learning. Consequently, children are not always purposefully engaged and helped to achieve enough. Children are well cared for and behave well. The outdoor area is not immediately adjacent to the classroom and is not adequately resourced to extend children's development in all areas of their learning. The partnership with parents is good and contributes well to children's learning. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Although children's achievements are assessed on entry to the Reception Year, this information is not used well enough to identify the next steps in learning and evaluate their progress.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement in Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics.
- Make better use of assessment to evaluate the impact of teaching on learning and improve pupils' progress across the school.
- Plan purposeful and well-matched activities for children in the Foundation Stage across all areas of learning.
- Improve outdoor facilities for play and to maximise learning in the Foundation Stage.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted Inspector before their next Section 5 Inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

The majority of pupils demonstrate broadly average standards on entry to Year 1 and they make good progress through Years 1 and 2. Many enter Year 3 with above average standards. Whilst the school has experienced some turbulence in the last few years, teaching is now more settled in Key Stage 2 and a more even picture of progress is developing. This has resulted in some good progress being made, particularly in pupils' writing, due to the school's recent strategies. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory across the school, but is still behind the improvements seen in English. Achievement is satisfactory overall for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, but Year 6 pupils are still making up some gaps in their learning. However, current standards are broadly average, which is an improvement on those attained last year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of how to conduct themselves and there is a good level of respect for themselves and for each other. Choral singing is outstanding and contributes well to pupils' personal development because it builds their confidence and promotes good relationships. Pupils have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles, shown in their regular focus on exercise and eating healthily. Safe practices are good and evident from pupils' good behaviour and their concentration on safety throughout the school. Pupils enjoy school; they enjoy particularly the company of their friends. Attendance is satisfactory. The school makes a good contribution to the community, raising the school's profile and building the confidence of pupils through the performing arts. Pupils are gaining a satisfactory level of basic skills in literacy and numeracy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Whilst teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, there are good features in the positive relationships which are created in classrooms that are generally well organised and in which behaviour is managed effectively. Where teaching is good, it involves the pupils actively in their learning and time is used well. In these lessons, learning moves on at a good pace. However, this is not always the case: in some lessons in Key Stage 2 and in the Foundation Stage, the

pace is moderate. A strong focus in recent times has led to a consistent effort to improve pupils' writing and the use of targets to improve pupils' work. The school is beginning to take steps to improve teaching and learning in mathematics, but there is still more to do in this area of work. Some classes have interactive whiteboards, which are used well to engage pupils and capture their interest, but these have yet to be fitted in some teaching areas. The school has plans to extend this provision as part of a rolling programme.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall, promoting pupils' satisfactory development of their basic skills. It is enriched by a good range of visits, visitors and links with local schools. The programme of social and emotional teaching is good and is organised well. It contributes effectively to pupils' personal development and well-being. Music is a strength of the school and this provision is supported well by specialist teaching throughout the school; pupils therefore have many opportunities to perform in school and in the community. The school has begun to make meaningful links between subjects but, currently, there is more to be done in this area. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities promoting pupils' awareness of healthy lifestyles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Procedures for safeguarding pupils and measures to promote their health and safety are in place. There are satisfactory transition arrangements between key stages. Pupils are cared for well and they speak confidently about feeling safe in school. There is evidence of good quality marking which is consistent. Pupils are becoming aware of their own targets for improvement and they are starting to be encouraged to assess their own learning. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory overall. There are recently revised individual education plans which are child-friendly and which are beginning to involve pupils and their parents more in pupils' learning. The school is particularly good in catering for pupils with dyslexia. Academic guidance is currently satisfactory but is not yet used rigorously enough to improve pupils' progress. Attendance is improving through careful monitoring.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory at all levels. Following the recent decline in standards in Key Stage 2, particularly in writing, the school leaders took effective action and introduced new strategies. These are working well, as seen in the improving standards and progress across Key Stage 2, particularly in English. The school improvement plan identifies the correct priorities but there is currently a lesser focus on mathematics. Although some strategies have been implemented to improve mathematics, they have yet to impact fully on pupils' achievement. Self-evaluation is satisfactory but the school has an over-optimistic view of its own performance. This is because leadership and management do not yet make rigorous enough use of assessment information to evaluate fully the influence of teaching on learning. This weakness prevents progress being as quick as it could be, particularly in mathematics and in the Foundation Stage.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

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

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	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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?	3
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?	3

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?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

My colleagues and I really enjoyed our recent visit to your school. Thank you very much for your very warm welcome and for looking after us so well. You were very helpful in lessons when we asked you to explain what you were doing and also very friendly around the school. Particular thanks should go to the members of the school council who helped us to understand why it is that you enjoy your school so much. We think that your school is satisfactory and it has some outstanding elements, especially your singing which we enjoyed very much.

We know that your school cares for you well and makes sure that you can all join in fully with the work, which is prepared for you. Your school works well with many agencies to ensure your care and support. All the adults who support you in your lessons impressed us. Overall, we think you all try very hard to make your school community a happy and secure place.

We also hope that our visit will help your school to improve. We are asking the staff to do four things. First, to try to make sure that those of you in Years 3 to 6 improve your standards in mathematics; second, that when your teachers assess your work, they make better use of that information to improve your progress. In the Foundation Stage, we would like your teachers to make sure that they carefully plan activities that cover all the different areas of learning that make up the curriculum, building on what you have already learned. Finally we have asked that those boys and girls in the Foundation Stage have better facilities for outdoor play in their lessons.

Thank you once again for all your help when we made our visit to you. We send you all our very best wishes for the future. We do hope that you continue to enjoy learning as much as you do at the moment.