

Huntley Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115686
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	312030
Inspection date	8 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	82
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Michaela Marshall
Headteacher	Madeleine Owen
Date of previous school inspection	15 November 2004
School address	Ross Road Huntley GL19 3EX
Telephone number	01452 830510
Fax number	01452 830510

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector, who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: • The effectiveness of actions taken to raise standards in writing in Years 1 and 2, and mathematics across the school. • How aware pupils are of growing up in a culturally diverse Britain. • The extent to which governors challenge the school and the contribution of all parties, including the federation, in raising standards and driving the school forward. Evidence was gathered from an examination of the school's documentation, parents' questionnaires and pupils' work, observations of pupils in classes, around the school and in the playground, as well as interviews with members of staff, pupils, governors and parents. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

Most pupils attend this small school from the local village and surrounding area. The school is part of a federation, GlosMaTCH, with three other nearby primary schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school. It has some outstanding features, particularly in the level of care and support provided for the pupils which contributes to their excellent personal development. Pupils enjoy their learning in a lively and stimulating learning environment. The dedication and commitment of all staff contribute effectively to the strong Christian ethos of the school and shine through in all that they do. The headteacher provides very strong leadership, which ensures that the school continues to improve. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and are deeply appreciative of the good progress their children make and the excellent care provided for them. As one commented, 'A small school, beautifully compact, but like a Tardis, so much to offer once inside.'

Children get a good start in Reception, where there is a wide range of stimulating activities and a strong focus on the development of their social and communication skills. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress and reach standards that are above average in all areas of the curriculum. The school has focused successfully on raising the standards of writing this year after a slight decline to broadly average standards over the last two years. This good progress is sustained as pupils move up through the school, so that by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, standards are above average and their achievement is good. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are particularly high.

The school has worked hard to maintain above average standards, tackling issues successfully before they become problems. This is due to the meticulous monitoring of pupils' progress throughout the school. Information from assessments has been used very well to identify where difficulties may be arising, and to take action to tackle them. Mathematics has been a focus this year, not only at Huntley but throughout the whole federation, which has worked effectively with the local secondary school to ensure that pupils, particularly at the higher and lower ends of ability, are well supported or challenged. The result has been greatly improved levels of numeracy. However, pupils have not consistently had enough opportunities to practise these skills in problem solving and investigative activities. For the most part, pupils take a pride in their work, and the vivid and lively displays around the school confirm this. Occasionally presentation is not as good as it could be, and this detracts from what is often very good content.

The enthusiastic responses and excitement generated in lessons illustrate how much pupils enjoy their education. They comment that 'teachers try to make learning as much fun as possible, they always try and include lots of practical and creative work'. Teachers ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn and why. They challenge their pupils. As one pupil commented, 'You have to use your brain a lot!' Particular care is taken to match work to the differing abilities of pupils to ensure that all make good progress. The decision to set pupils by ability for literacy and numeracy this year has further enabled this to happen. Teachers' skilled questioning, short-burst tasks and the use of 'talk partners' generally keep things moving on well. However, pupils' work shows that sometimes the pace slips a little and they do not always complete enough written work. Teaching assistants and volunteers give very good support to pupils in class and small groups. Marking is of a high quality. It identifies what pupils have done well and where there needs to be improvement. Pupils say that they find it very helpful.

The school strives to provide a stimulating and exciting curriculum for its pupils. It is aiming at present to increase the level of creativity and to be more innovative. Themed days and weeks, such as health week, provide very good opportunities to enrich pupils' learning experiences. Visits and visitors enliven learning and make it more fun for the pupils, and the school has excellent links with the other schools in its International Partnership. These have played a major part in ensuring that pupils have an excellent awareness of growing up in a culturally diverse society. The school's very good personal, social and health education plays a major part in ensuring that pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils benefit from a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are well supported.

All adults take excellent care of the pupils, who receive outstanding support for their personal development. The school has worked successfully with parents to improve attendance to an above average level. There are strong links with outside agencies to further support pupils when needed. Arrangements for risk assessments are rigorous and procedures for safeguarding children are fully in place. Particular attention is paid to internet safety. The monitoring of pupils' progress is very good, and pupils understand and discuss their targets knowledgeably.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school. They have mature attitudes to their learning, and are appreciative of their teachers' efforts, and feel that 'they really want us to do well in later life'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective. They take full advantage of the quiet area outside, and say that 'you can go there to think things through, it's calm and relaxing'. Behaviour is excellent and the playground is a happy place. Peer mediators help to keep it that way, although, as pupils said, 'Mediators aren't often needed, but it's good to know that they're there.' Pupils have an excellent understanding of the need to stay safe and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. They enjoy taking on their many responsibilities in school and eagerly raise funds for national and international charities. They take great pride in having raised enough money to buy a donkey and cart for a village in Africa. Pupils' good skills in numeracy and literacy, very high ICT skills and their outstanding ability to work closely together provide an outstanding preparation for their future lives.

The school has benefited considerably through being part of a federation. The employment of a joint leader for pupils with difficulties and/or disabilities ensures that all benefit from a good level of expertise and consistency of approach. This represents excellent value for money. Joint training initiatives and visits help to broaden teachers' experiences and thus improve the quality of teaching and learning. A joint development plan is useful and identifies key priorities for all four schools. The facility to 'tweak' it to reflect each school's individual needs has been well considered and ensures that each school's individuality is also maintained and respected.

The headteacher provides very clear direction to the school. All staff know how well the school is doing and their self-evaluation is accurate. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school. They monitor the school's work rigorously and challenge it well as to its performance. Information from data is used well to identify specific areas for improvement so that all pupils can perform to their potential. For example, good action has been taken to improve standards in mathematics and writing. Taking all this into account, it is clear that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children join Reception they generally have skills that are broadly in line with those of children of a similar age, although their knowledge and understanding of the world and their

creative development are sometimes lower than expected. They make good progress and the majority join Year 1 having reached average standards in all areas. Teaching is lively and interesting and focuses strongly on language development. There is a good balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. The curriculum is good. However, the expansion of activities to the outside area to develop children's independence is hampered a little by the very limited space available. The care and attention given to children's welfare are excellent, and children with learning difficulties are well provided for. Staff show a very good understanding of the needs of young children, whose progress is carefully monitored, allowing activities to be planned at the right level to help children develop and learn.

What the school should do to improve further

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- Increase the opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills through solving problems and investigation.
- Improve the presentation of pupils' work.

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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
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	1

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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

9 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Huntley C of E Primary School, Huntley GL19 3EX

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when we visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you enjoy your work and all the activities in which you are involved. Your school gives you a good education and is working hard to make it even better.

These are the things I liked best.

- You are making good progress with your English, mathematics and science, and I was very impressed with the exciting ways in which you use ICT.
- You behave very well and are really keen and enthusiastic about your learning.
- You really understand how important it is to eat healthily, and take physical exercise. The projects you carried out in 'health week' showed this very clearly.
- Teachers make learning interesting and fun for you, and you know how to improve your work through marking and target setting.
- You have a varied curriculum and your learning themes are really exciting and interesting for you.
- The teachers and staff take excellent care of you while you are in school.
- Your headteacher and governors lead the school well and are very keen to make it even better.
- There are a very few things that could be even better.
- Your skills in numeracy have improved tremendously this year. However, you need more opportunities to apply them in solving problems.
- The second area, you can really help with: your work is not presented as neatly as it could be. This is a great pity as the untidiness detracts from what is often very good content.

I am glad you enjoy your school so much, and hope you will continue to work hard.

Very best wishes

Mrs Christine Huard Lead Inspector