

John Hunt Infant and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122614
Local Authority	NOTTINGHAMSHIRE LA
Inspection number	314345
Inspection date	13 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs R Dalby
Headteacher	Mrs J E Braddow
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2004
School address	London Road New Balderton Newark Nottinghamshire NG24 3BN
Telephone number	01636 682007
Fax number	01636 682008

Age group	3-7
Inspection date	13 December 2007
Inspection number	314345

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- How the school is improving boys' writing.
- How well pupils are helped to understand how they can improve.
- The impact of the leadership and accuracy of self-evaluation.

The inspector gathered evidence from observations of lessons, samples of pupils' work, discussions with pupils, staff and the chair of the governors, and from parents' questionnaires. The main documents used by the school in monitoring and strategic planning were examined. 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

This is a smaller than average school for its type. It is situated in the village of Balderton on the outskirts of Newark. A broadly average proportion of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. A small number of pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds; very few have English as an additional language. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is broadly average overall but high in some year groups. Attainment on entry to the school varies but is mostly below that typically expected. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools Gold Award. The headteacher is currently also acting headteacher of a nearby junior school and there are plans to amalgamate the two schools in the near future.

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 school. Staff have created a very caring but demanding ethos that is helping pupils achieve above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is the result of excellent leadership and outstanding teaching and learning. The pupils really enjoy being there and the parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One wrote: 'Through strong leadership and well-motivated, dedicated staff, the children are well supported to help them achieve their full potential, whilst making it fun for them.'

The standards achieved by the end of Year 2 are consistently above average. As well as in the basic literacy and numeracy skills, it is evident that standards are high throughout the curriculum, including in information and communication technology (ICT). These high standards are the result of outstanding progress from the low levels evident when children start in the Nursery. By the end of the Reception year, children have reached the expected levels, and some have exceeded them. This excellent progress continues through Years 1 and 2. In most cases, all groups of pupils make equally good progress and the achievement of those with learning difficulties or disabilities is equally as positive as their peers. One of the school's many strengths is the way it identifies and addresses any emerging weaknesses. The staff introduced a number of measures to raise standards because they recognised that boys' writing skills were lower than those of the girls. These are beginning to have a positive impact and the next step is to ensure that staff continue to provide sufficient opportunities for boys to write in English lessons and in other subjects.

The high standards achieved by pupils are the result of high quality teaching and learning. Staff have created a vibrant, bright and exciting learning environment in which the celebration of pupils' work has a very high profile. Teachers work very closely with the very effective teaching assistants and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Lessons are very well planned: teachers ensure the work is well matched to pupils' prior attainment and is sufficiently challenging. Staff make very effective use of ICT to plan and present exciting lessons, and there is a strong focus on speaking and listening throughout the school which has a beneficial effect on the development of other literacy skills. This also has a positive impact on pupils' abilities to work together collaboratively and cooperatively to solve problems. For example, in one excellent session pupils worked together in small groups to design and make life-size patterns for Nativity costumes out of newspaper.

The outstanding teaching also creates ideal conditions for pupils' excellent personal development. Their spiritual, social, moral and cultural understanding is very well developed through a wide range of activities. Their behaviour in and out of classrooms is excellent, and they are a pleasure both to talk to and to teach. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and safe. They talk openly about how much they enjoy school and how any bad behaviour or bullying is very rare. They are confident that they are well looked after and that there are adults they trust or can turn to if worried. The school takes a good account of pupils' views through the 'decision makers' group and this is part of the excellent contribution pupils make to their own and the wider community. The staff have worked hard to reinforce the need for regular attendance with parents and this has improved greatly and is now above average. The high level of basic skills that pupils are achieving prepare them outstandingly well for their future education and life after school.

The school provides an outstanding curriculum. This is the basis for much of the excellent work evident. As well as the basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, the teachers provide a rich and creative curriculum where good links are made between subjects so that skills learned in one area can be used in another. For example, pupils linked design and technology skills developed when making a Christmas decoration to literacy work as they learned to write clear instructions on how it was done. This helped to make their learning more meaningful as well as making the task more enjoyable. The curriculum is further enriched by excellent opportunities for a wide range of educational visits out of school. In addition, visitors are used as a valuable resource in a range of ways. Pupils' understanding of the multicultural nature of society is very effectively developed through visits to places of worship.

The school provides pupils with an outstanding level of care and support. Pupils are well looked after and encouraged to develop safe practices. The school follows national guidelines for keeping pupils safe, for checking on adults who work with them, completing detailed risk assessments and for dealing with any health and safety issues. Pupils' academic guidance is excellent. Their progress is tracked in detail and this information is used by staff to identify early any pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, or who may be at risk of underachieving. The school is very inclusive and this is reflected in pupils' attitudes towards each other. Challenging targets are set for pupils and, together with the excellent marking of their work, this helps them understand how they can improve. They are very clear about what the next steps in their learning should be.

The outstanding aspects of the school are directly related to the excellent leadership of the headteacher. She sets a very clear direction for the work of the school and has very high expectations of pupils and staff. A major strength, which is evident from talking to all staff, is that the school is not complacent, even though standards are consistently above average, and staff are continually looking for improvement. This stems from the example of the headteacher and her senior staff, the detailed self-evaluation, and is obvious in the school's willingness to look outside itself for ideas and improvements. The governing body provides an excellent level of support and challenge, and together the staff and governors evaluate the work of the school accurately and honestly. The improvement since the last inspection and the willingness to take on and see through any changes show that there is an outstanding capacity for the school to maintain the high standards and improve even further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The teaching and learning throughout the Foundation Stage is excellent and results in children having a very settled and happy start to school, and in them making excellent progress towards the expected learning goals. The accommodation is used very imaginatively, and this creates an exciting and interesting place to learn. All staff work very well together and so teachers are very well supported by the range of other adults. Resources are appropriate and the planning ensures lessons are challenging but appropriate for the ages of the children. As one parent wrote 'The teachers make learning exciting and stimulating. My child has grown in confidence academically and socially. She loves it!'

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that pupils, especially boys, have sufficient opportunities to write at length and for different purposes.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ 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

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	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	1
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

14 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of John Hunt Infant and Nursery School, Newark NG24 3BN

I am writing to thank you for the way you made me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I really enjoyed my visit and watching you work and play during that day. I especially enjoyed my lunch and talking to the group of you who were so willing to answer my questions about the school.

You told me you enjoyed being at school and I can understand why. I think you go to an outstanding school. It is excellent at helping you learn but also very caring. The adults teach you a lot of new things but they also look after you well. You told me that you feel safe at school and that you behave well most of the time! I think your behaviour is excellent and you are very friendly and polite children.

The way you are so good and enjoy school really helps the teachers to teach you new things and allows them to find interesting and exciting things for you to do. I saw how interesting your lessons were when Reception met Zig, the alien, who had just landed on Earth!

Mrs Braddow and the teachers work very hard to make the school an exciting place to learn, and to help you achieve very good standards. One of the things they have tried to do recently is help you become better at writing. This is beginning to work and I saw some good examples of your writing. I think the school needs to carry on with this work to make sure that you all - and particularly the boys - continue to get even better in the future.

Thank you once again for your help and friendliness. Enjoy your time at John Hunt and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms

Lead inspector