

Hungerford Primary School and Children's Centre

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100435
Local Authority	Islington
Inspection number	323277
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Chesterfield

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	459
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	39
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Tim Johnson
Headteacher	Mr Brian Bench
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Hungerford Road York Way London N7 9LF
Telephone number	020 7607 4187

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2009
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Fax number

020 7609 4941

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average and incorporates a children's centre, part of which is on a nearby site. A very high proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The majority of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, and about half the pupils are learning English as an additional language. An above-average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These are mainly behavioural, speech and language difficulties, or related to autism. The proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs is also above average. The school has gained a number of awards, including the Healthy School Award. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is offered in the school's Nursery and Reception classes, and in the children's centre Nursery and baby and toddler rooms. There has been considerable staff turnover in the last two years. The posts of head of centre and deputy head of centre are currently vacant, though a new head of centre has recently been appointed.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hungerford Primary School and Children's Centre is a good school, where pupils achieve well and make a good start to their education. The school has created an outstanding partnership with parents and the local community, making excellent use of its facilities and of outside services for the benefit of pupils and their families. Parents are rightly appreciative of what the school has to offer. One commented, 'We have a great community feel about us,' while another said, 'I have only positive comments to make regarding the centre.'

Pupils make good progress during their time at the school. They arrive in the Nurseries with a very low level of skills compared with expectations for their age, especially in their language and social skills. They make good progress, entering Year 1 with skills which are below average. They make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, and move into Year 3 with standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are still below average. Their progress accelerates in Years 3 to 6, and they leave the school reaching standards which are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Fewer pupils reach the higher levels in their tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 than is the case nationally.

Pupils achieve well because they are well taught. Teaching and learning in the school are good, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6. Typically, teachers set a good pace to lessons, match work well to pupils' needs, and use other adults well to support pupils, especially those with behavioural or speech and language difficulties or autism, and those who are learning English as an additional language. As a result, these pupils make good progress. Where teaching and learning are satisfactory, teachers do not always give pupils the right amount of challenge or support, and do not always make clear their expectations for behaviour in lessons. Academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory overall, but there is inconsistency in the way teachers use marking and target setting across the school. There is some good practice, but often marking and target setting do not help pupils understand how to improve their work and make better progress.

Pastoral care for pupils is good, and means that they enjoy school and feel happy and settled in school. One parent described the staff as 'fantastic and caring,' and pupils feel very positive about the help they get from adults. Excellent links with outside agencies enable pupils and their families to access the best support available to help overcome any difficulties they may have. Thanks to this strong support, pupils' personal development is good, despite their low starting points. They make the most of the opportunities available at school, and are keen to play their part in the local and the wider community. They enjoy a well-balanced curriculum, and are enthusiastic about extra-curricular activities. They behave well in class and around the school, though a number of the younger ones sometimes need to be reminded what is expected of them in lessons.

The school has maintained and improved on the quality of its provision and outcomes since the last inspection, because it is well led and managed. The headteacher and his senior team have steered the school successfully through a period of immense and exciting change, as the school has amalgamated with the children's centre and co-located with a special school. There is a clear vision for the future to provide the best possible services for children and their families. The school has a good capacity for future improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

There is good provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in both the school and the children's centre. Children achieve well in both settings. They enter with skills which are very low for their age, especially in communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress, although their skills are still below expectations for their age when they leave Reception. Adult support for children is good in both settings, and good use is made of the key person system to ensure that all children and parents know who is overseeing their or their child's welfare. The staff forge excellent partnerships with parents to understand the needs of each child. Parents comment on how staff make every effort to establish and maintain a dialogue with them. One said, 'Staff always discuss at the end of the day what has been done and eaten. I find this very helpful and informative.'

Good attention is given to welfare, especially for the youngest children, where staff focus on keeping surroundings hygienic and developing personal care skills. At lunchtime in the baby room, for example, the babies were encouraged to feed themselves, with lots of praise from adults for their attempts. There is good provision for learning and development in both settings. The spacious and well-resourced accommodation for the Nursery classes, and for the babies and toddlers, means that a full range of activities can be offered to cover all the areas of learning. The outdoor areas are especially attractive and exciting places for the children to explore. In the Reception classes, though, the cramped nature of the classrooms restricts the opportunities which can be offered to children.

Staff work well with children, focusing particularly on developing their language and social skills. Sometimes, though, opportunities for encouraging early writing skills are not imaginative enough to entice children to try them out. The interim leadership and management arrangements, before the new head of centre arrives, are working well. The school's senior leadership team is making good use of the expertise of the local authority consultant, to oversee daily organisation and ensure that planning and assessment are kept up to date.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement and standards in Years 1 and 2.
- Raise the achievement of more-able pupils across the school.
- Improve the consistency of target setting and marking.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils enter Year 1 with skills which are below expectations. Their progress in Years 1 and 2 is generally satisfactory, as they consistently leave Year 2 with below-average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The school has identified that pupils' low level of language skills have hampered their understanding in both English and mathematics, and has set about increasing the level of support for pupils and teachers in these classes. There are encouraging signs of improvement this year.

By the time they leave Year 6, pupils consistently reach average standards in mathematics and science, and broadly average standards in English. There is a good focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and building their experiences for writing through drama and role

play, in order to consolidate their achievement in language. Pupils' progress in Years 3 to 6 is good, thanks to the teaching and support that they receive. Pupils with additional needs are particularly well supported, but the school has recognised that there is not always enough challenge and support for more-able pupils, to enable them to reach the standards of which they are capable.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy and confident, and enjoy coming to school. Their behaviour is good, and this helps them to learn well, especially in Years 3 to 6. They concentrate well, join in enthusiastically, and try to contribute answers whenever they can. Their attendance has improved steadily since the last inspection, thanks to the hard work of the school, and is now in line with national levels.

Pupils are tolerant of others' differences and work and play well together, no matter what their background, faith or ethnic groups. They have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and stay safe in and out of school. Pupils take responsibility willingly, for example as members of the school council or as playground buddies. They contribute well to their own and the wider community, raising money for a range of charities, taking part in local events, and corresponding with their pen pals in an African school. Their good social skills and their satisfactory literacy and numeracy skills mean that they are adequately prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching means that pupils learn well in the school, particularly in Years 3 to 6, where lessons are lively and active. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understand the differing and wide-ranging needs of the pupils in their classes. They make good use of other adults to support pupils, especially those with additional needs, and of resources, particularly information and communication technology (ICT). They capture pupils' interest and ensure that they learn well, although there is not always enough support and challenge to make sure that the more-able pupils learn as well as they could. Sometimes teachers do not match their tasks well to the needs of the pupils or make clear their expectations for behaviour, and this slows down the pace of teaching and learning. This happens more frequently in Years 1 and 2.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school's curriculum offers pupils a well-balanced curriculum, with a good focus on literacy and numeracy and thoughtful links between subjects. This means that pupils find their learning interesting and say that they like school because teachers make lessons fun. Good links have been developed to support the curriculum, particularly with the local secondary school offering specialist support for ICT. The school is still refining its curriculum to make it more relevant to the community in which the pupils live. Pupils enjoy many other activities which enliven the curriculum, including sporting clubs and music teaching, and many visits in and beyond London. They talk with enthusiasm of taking part in sports tournaments, or visiting the recycling centre.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pastoral care of pupils is good, and the requirements for safeguarding pupils are met. Knowledge of individual pupils and their needs is a strong feature of the school. Particularly effective tracking systems allow staff to identify pupils at risk of underachieving and create action plans to help them move forward. However, inconsistencies in some classes in the setting of targets for improvement, and in the quality of marking, reduce the progress made by some pupils.

The school involves a wide range of professionals to maximise support for each child. The quality of the work done with its many partners has a very positive effect on pupils' personal development and their progress, especially that of vulnerable pupils. The very strong links with the adjacent special school bring benefits to both sets of pupils. There is excellent extended day provision, which is greatly appreciated by children and parents alike. There is also an excellent and extensive range of community initiatives which draw families and members of the local community into the school and help them develop their skills and contacts. The 'Stay and play' sessions are especially popular with all sections of the parent community.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and the senior leadership team give the school good direction, and have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and its areas for development. They have given the school an important sense of continuity and stability through a period of great change and high staff turnover. The subject coordinators who make up the senior management team are keen to develop their roles, as several are new and inexperienced. The school has a strong focus on professional development and support for teachers, in order to improve their skills and the outcomes for pupils. There is a strong commitment to equal opportunities and a genuine desire to give every pupil the opportunity to do the best that they can in life. The school is a focal point for its community, and makes a good contribution to community cohesion. Computer courses for adults take place on the site, for example, as well as classes in English for speakers of other languages. The governors play a good part in supporting the school and holding it to account for the decisions made.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which 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 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?	2

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

01 April 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hungerford Primary School and Children's Centre, London, N7 9LF

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting and talking to you. We agree with you that Hungerford Primary is a good school, and we could see that you are happy there. You are doing well in lessons, because your teachers know you well and give you work that is right for you.

We were impressed with your good behaviour, in class and around the school, and we saw that you all get on well together. The staff take good care of you, and those of you who need extra help are well supported. Your school offers an excellent range of services to your families and the people who live in the local community.

The headteacher and his staff run the school well, and want to make it even better in the future. We have asked your teachers to make sure that those of you in Years 1 and 2 do as well as you can in all your lessons. They are also going to make sure that pupils in the top groups in each class have work which challenges them, and that you all understand how to improve your work. You can help by telling your teacher if:

- you do not understand something in a lesson
- your work is too hard or too easy
- you do not understand something your teacher has written in your book.

Well done to you all, and best wishes for the future.

Yours faithfully

Jane Chesterfield

Lead Inspector