

Hunters Bar Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106994
Local Authority	Sheffield
Inspection number	324504
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Joan McKenna

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	356
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr S Randall
Headteacher	Mrs Jill Hallsworth
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2006
School address	Sharrow Vale Road Sheffield South Yorkshire S11 8ZG
Telephone number	0114 2660547
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large junior school which serves a broadly average socio-economic area. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups has risen in recent years and is well above average. Currently, almost half of the pupils are from 19 different minority ethnic heritages. English is the second language for around a quarter of pupils who speak 17 different first languages between them. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is a little above average, although the proportion with a statement of special educational need is below average. The school holds the Gold Artsmark award and it is a Creative Partnerships Change School.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Hunter's Bar Junior is a good school, which ensures that its pupils progress well both academically and personally.

Pupils enter the school with broadly average standards. Their achievement during their time in school is good and they reach above average standards by the time they leave. The vast majority of individuals and groups of pupils achieve well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those from minority ethnic groups. There is some inconsistency, however, across subjects and classes. For example, pupils achieve well in science and English, including in writing which has been weaker than reading in the past. Achievement in mathematics is not as strong. Academic provision is good overall. Much teaching is of high quality where imaginative approaches ensure the enjoyment, engagement and active involvement of pupils, and as a result, in these lessons they learn very well. Some parents talk of their children 'being inspired by such teaching'. Not all is of this quality, however. A broad curriculum, which is being further developed to promote pupils' creativity, makes a significant contribution to their good progress and enjoyment of school. Pupils' experiences and learning are considerably enriched through a wide range of links with local organisations and business and visitors such as authors working with pupils in the school.

Pastoral provision is also good. Pupils are well known as individuals and their personal well-being and their progress are regularly monitored so that appropriate support can be given where required. Pupils enjoy school, are keen to do well and participate enthusiastically in activities. Attendance is above average. Pupils make a good contribution to school life, showing consideration towards each other and the environment. They develop a clear sense of responsibility. For example, they understand how to keep healthy and behave in a safe manner. The cultural diversity of the school is celebrated, helping all pupils to feel valued.

The school is well led and managed. Strengths and areas requiring development are accurately identified and well-targeted action to tackle weaknesses is effective, as seen in the improvement in writing. Middle leaders play an increasing role in checking and developing their areas of responsibility. After a period of turbulence, governance is now effective. The school has improved well in some areas since the last inspection. However, improving communications with parents was identified as necessary and, despite clear steps having been taken to tackle this, it remains an issue. While only a minority of parents made their views about the school known to inspectors, the opinions of those that did were polarised. Some were positive about it, but a majority raised a variety of concerns, particularly about relationships with them and about the leadership of the school. This issue is hindering the capacity of the school to improve at its fastest possible rate, and as a result, capacity to improve is satisfactory rather than good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that all pupils achieve equally well across the school in all subjects, and particularly in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching and eliminate the inconsistency between lessons so that all pupils learn equally effectively.
- Improve relationships with parents.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Current standards are above average overall. The results of tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2008 were above average in English and science and average in mathematics. Standards in writing have improved due to the impact of a range of strategies adopted to bring this about, including encouraging boys to become more enthusiastic readers. Action to improve mathematics is now underway, including changes to the way pupils are grouped for the teaching of the subject. While there are some early signs of improvement, achievement in the subject stills lags behind that in English and science. Increased attention to meeting the needs of pupils who speak English as an additional language is having an impact so that some minority ethnic groups are making similar, and occasionally, better progress than other groups. However, some variability remains.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils display positive attitudes to school and to learning, and they talk enthusiastically about many activities. They get on well together and relationships between different groups of pupils are good. Many pupils are outgoing and confident and converse articulately and comfortably with adults. A minority are quieter and have to be encouraged to participate in activities or contribute to discussion. Most pupils behave well, and they say that if bullying occurs it is dealt with effectively. They have a clear understanding of the importance of diet and exercise in staying healthy, and participation in sporting activities is strong. Pupils make a good contribution to the school community through the wide range of opportunities available for them, such as acting as peer mediators, eco-hunters and play leaders. Older pupils are positive role models for younger ones in this regard. Pupils contribute to the wider community, for example, through raising money for charity. Pupils' good social skills and their developing literacy and numeracy skills prepare them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Relationships in lessons are usually very positive, so pupils do as teachers ask and are keen to learn. Activities are varied, and pupils participate eagerly when given the opportunity to be actively involved. Teaching often stimulates pupils, fires their imagination and requires them to think for themselves. Such lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, think for themselves and develop independent learning skills. Some lessons are less interesting. On these occasions, teachers either give too much or too little input to pupils and the input given is not always clear. When teachers plan lessons they usually give attention to the different ability levels within the class, and skilled teaching assistants give well-targeted and effective support to pupils with learning difficulties. Teachers do not always use enough strategies to support children with English as an additional language, however. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but does not consistently tell pupils what they have done well and how to improve their work.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a rich and balanced curriculum, which meets pupils' needs well. It is enhanced by a good range of clubs and out-of-school activities. Pupils enthuse about these visits. Visitors into school further enhance their learning opportunities, and, through the inclusion of representatives from minority ethnic heritages, widen the range of positive role models presented to pupils. For example, visits from authors and poets, such as Benjamin Zephaniah, provide valuable opportunities to spark pupils' interest in the written word, supporting the development of important writing skills. Staff are currently working closely together and with pupils to plan a creative curriculum to help pupils develop their skills and make connections in their learning in an interesting and exciting way. There is an additional focus on developing pupils' enquiry skills in Year 3. While very positive, this work is in its early stages. The school has rightly identified the need to develop the mathematics curriculum to be more effective and engaging to pupils. A strong emphasis on developing pupils' social and emotional skills supports their good personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

A range of strategies are in place to help pupils settle in to the school and to new classes. This includes Year 5 pupils showing Year 2 pupils around the school, and those joining at other times being allocated a pupil 'buddy'. The positive relationships that adults have with pupils mean that pupils feel able to raise any worries or concerns with them, and there is sensitive handling of these. Thorough procedures are in place for identifying individual needs and there is good liaison with external agencies to help support pupils where necessary. Safeguarding procedures, including arrangements for checking the suitability of adults working with pupils, meet current government requirements. Newly introduced systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are very thorough and the resulting information is analysed well to identify where there is any underachievement or where action is needed to bring about improvement. Effective strategies ensure those with additional learning needs progress well. Arrangements for meeting different language needs are less well developed. Most pupils know and understand their targets and what to do to meet them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide strong leadership, clearly focused on improving pupils' achievement and experiences. Appropriately challenging targets for pupils' attainment are set. The effectiveness of the school is carefully monitored, resulting in clear plans and actions to bring about improvement. Weaknesses are explicitly tackled, and good practice is identified and shared. The team approach in operation is effective, providing good opportunities for middle leaders to develop their leadership skills and for all teachers to contribute to developing the school. The governing body, which includes many new members alongside more experienced ones who chair committees, carries out its duties well, asking probing questions about the school and mainly working in good partnership with the school's leaders to help bring about improvement. Good steps are taken to promote equality and community cohesion. The school ensures that the cultures and religions of pupils within the school are celebrated and

takes steps to ensure there is no discrimination. The progress of all groups of pupils is monitored and the action that is taken to address differences is generally effective. Some very positive links are made with individuals and organisations in the local and wider community to develop pupils' understanding of the world beyond school. Senior leaders and governors recognise that, despite efforts made, they have not yet gained the support of all parents.

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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?	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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/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	2
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	2

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**

Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming when we inspected your school earlier this week. We enjoyed talking with you very much. I would now like to let you know the findings of our inspection.

We judge that Hunter's Bar Juniors is a good school. It makes sure you develop well personally and that you make good progress in your learning. You are well looked after and staff regularly check on how you are and how you are getting on. This means they know what support to give you to make sure you are happy and settled in school and to help you achieve better with your work. Teaching is good, and some lessons are great fun, with interesting activities that you can get really involved in, and these help you learn well. The school provides a good range of activities such as clubs, visits and visitors into school to help make sure you have a wide range of experiences. These help you enjoy school. You have good relationships with each other and you behave well. You have a lot of opportunities to make a contribution to your school, such as by being play leaders and eco-hunters, and you carry out these responsibilities very well.

The leaders in your school are doing a good job of improving the school for you. For example, the things they have done to make writing more exciting means that you are now reaching higher standards in the subject. As in any school, there are always ways in which it can be better. We have asked your school to focus on three things to help it improve. I have said that some lessons are especially good at helping you learn, but not all are equally effective and so we have asked that the quality of teaching is made more consistent. In a similar way, although you mostly achieve well overall, some of you don't make this fast progress in all subjects and lessons. For example, you don't make quite such good progress in mathematics as you do in English. So, we have asked that the school helps all of you make equally good progress in your work. Finally, some parents are very happy with your school, but some others are not as satisfied. We have asked the school to work even harder to make sure it develops good relationships with all parents.

You can help by working hard and joining in all the activities provided for you.