

Hungerford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109816
Local Authority	West Berkshire
Inspection number	325035
Inspection date	8 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	372
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	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Neale Marney MBE
Headteacher	Ms Karen Sawyer
Date of previous school inspection	21 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Fairview Road Hungerford RG17 0BT
Telephone number	01488 682 230
Fax number	01488 681 625

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The school was visited for one day. The inspectors investigated the following issues in detail:

- progress and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage
- pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2
- the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6.

Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, together with curriculum and planning documents. In addition, observations were made of the school at work; including observations of parts of some lessons. Interviews were held with some staff, pupils and governors. The parents' responses to the questionnaires were evaluated. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is larger than average. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds. Very few speak English as an additional language and none of these pupils is at an early stage of learning English. A below average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These include pupils who find learning difficult and some with emotional and behavioural problems. The school has provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in two Reception classes.

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 is close to achieving its aim to be outstanding in every respect. Parents' comments, including, 'We are very lucky to have such a wonderful school for our children to attend', 'Couldn't ask for more', and, 'An exceptional school', reflect the views expressed by the overwhelming majority of parents who responded to the questionnaire.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and is supported by an excellent leadership team. They have sustained the exemplary inclusive ethos of which parents and pupils are justifiably proud. An unremitting commitment to ensuring all pupils do as well as they can is shared by the whole staff and the governors.

The understanding and skills children have as they enter the school are a little below those typical of the age group. Pupils achieve well through the school and reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. Good headway has been made in accelerating the progress of the more able pupils in writing through Key Stage 1, and in mathematics and science through Key Stage 2. A dip in the standards reached by such pupils in 2008 is being addressed effectively, and currently, pupils of higher ability are on course to reach above average standards. Staff are aware of the need to embed fully the successful strategies that have led to these improvements. Pupils who have moderate learning difficulties and those who have social and communication problems are supported extremely well and make good progress. Their attainment is above that found nationally for such pupils.

Overall, the teaching is good, with much that is outstanding, and this is the main reason that pupils progress well. In addition, pupils' extremely positive attitudes to learning make a major contribution to their achievement. Teachers are highly skilled in drawing on pupils' prior learning to extend their thinking. They use questions deftly. Lessons are very well planned and teachers routinely share the learning objectives for each lesson, so pupils have a clear idea of the purpose of the work. In a few lessons, however, opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and develop their independence are constrained by too much teacher direction. Teaching assistants play a significant role in helping pupils who are falling behind and in providing extra challenge for the more able pupils.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are outstanding. This owes much to the fact that they know they are valued as individuals. Pupils from all backgrounds and of differing abilities walk with their heads held high. Pupils behave extremely well. They are developing a very good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when near a road, river or canal, and how they should respond to any peer pressure. Older pupils gain a good awareness of internet safety, including the potential risk of cyber-bullying by email, social networking websites, and of the potential misuse of mobile phones. They have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy nutrition and exercise. They participate eagerly in physical education lessons and in the many extra activities, such as rugby, cricket, cross-country running and swimming. Pupils' strong empathy and concern for those in less fortunate circumstances is evident in the way they initiate fundraising events and support national charities. Older pupils regularly host events for senior citizens, serving them tea and singing for them.

Pupils make an excellent contribution to school life. They express their views formally through the school council and eagerly contribute ideas during lessons. They spoke enthusiastically of the pupil nominations for 'Character Counts' certificates, which acknowledge personal qualities

and individual contributions. Within the family atmosphere, pupils look out for one another. A pupil new to the school said, 'Everyone is friendly and makes you very welcome'. Older pupils willingly help younger ones at break times and sensitively support them during lunch. Pupils are well prepared for subsequent education and beyond. In addition to gaining secure literacy, numeracy and computer skills, they develop very good interpersonal skills, high self-esteem, confidence and self-discipline.

The excellent curriculum contributes exceedingly well to pupils' achievement and personal development. Planning takes into account what pupils have already learned and is extremely well tailored to their individual needs. Conscious that there is little racial diversity within the school and the surrounding community, there is a strong focus on global awareness through links with schools in other parts of the UK and also in Africa. Involvement with a global schools project has led to consistent and frequent reviews of the curriculum to ensure a broad coverage of the wider world. A recent 'Around the World Week' included pupils learning about Pakistan, Russia, Native American Indians and China. Such activities make an excellent contribution to pupils' levels of tolerance, their opposition to stereotyping and racism, and promote community cohesion effectively. Circle time and citizenship teaching, including events such as 'My Future Day', play a valuable role in preparing pupils for adult life.

Attendance rates are good; there is very low persistent absence compared with similar schools. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is promoted very well by imaginative approaches that interest and engage them. Pupils talked enthusiastically about their work on life cycles and food chains, which involved visits to a local trout farm to learn about how trouts' eggs hatch. Pupils' skills in art were enhanced when a group of the most able pupils worked recently with a visiting artist to create collages of historical events. A wide range of extra activities broadens pupils' experience. The many sporting clubs promote health, fitness and teamwork.

Procedures for ensuring pupils' safety are first class and parents much appreciate the outstanding care, guidance and support their children receive. One parent paid a moving tribute to the care provided for her child who has social and communication difficulties, writing, '...I believe we would not be where we are now if it wasn't for the great dedication and commitment of teachers'. Other comments included, 'I'm amazed how caring all the staff and children are towards each other', and 'I could not ask for a more supportive, caring and knowledgeable school for my son'. Procedures for safeguarding children are excellent, and health and safety are given high priority. The first class care provided for pupils is also evident from the numerous positive comments made by parents about the breakfast and after school provision. Pupils receive excellent academic guidance. Informed by meticulous tracking of their progress, teachers' marking pinpoints where pupils are and indicates clearly what they need to do next.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Very many parents extolled the inspirational leadership of the headteacher. One wrote, 'She seems to possess the magical quality that all children love her while being in awe of her and showing total respect'. There is a very strong team spirit and all staff are committed to sustaining a learning environment that stimulates and engages the pupils. The headteacher and senior staff provide excellent role models as classroom teachers. They are quick to respond to fluctuations in performance. In response to a dip in the achievement by Year 6 pupils in 2008, particularly by the more able, effective strategies were introduced and current pupils are on track to reach above average standards.

Governors take their role in holding the school to account very seriously and play a full part in the school's excellent monitoring and review procedures. They are actively involved in strategic planning. They manage funds well and this helps to ensure good value for money. The school's

excellent capacity to improve is evident from the very good progress made since the last inspection and the common determination to move further forward.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. As they start school, their understanding, knowledge and skills are a little below those typical of the age group, especially in communication, language and literacy. Learning and development are good because the curriculum is rich, relevant and engaging. Children enjoy a wide range of activities such as imaginative role play, making insects out of clay and enthusiastically making their own books. The balance of activities which adults lead and those which children choose and pursue independently is effective. By the end of the Reception year, the children reach standards that are above those for their age and they are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The two Reception classes form a cohesive Early Years Foundation Stage led by a very experienced and skilful coordinator. This works particularly well, given that staff have varying amounts of experience and some are relatively new to teaching or to working with such young children. Together they are an effective team which successfully supports and extends children's learning and social needs. Children's personal development, well-being and welfare are excellent. Although the secure outdoor area is very small it is used imaginatively and effectively, and the extensive school grounds provide an additional outdoor learning environment.

What the school should do to improve further

- Embed the current successful teaching strategies to further accelerate the achievement of the more able pupils in writing through Years 1 and 2, and in mathematics and science through Years 3 to 6.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and develop their independence in lessons.

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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	1

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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

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?	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
The extent to which 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	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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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 eliminated	1
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	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

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

21 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hungerford Primary School, Hungerford, RG17 0BT

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You told us how much you enjoy being there and we agree with you that Hungerford Primary is a good school. The headteacher and staff work extremely hard to keep you safe and happy. You get the help and support you need to learn and achieve well and reach good standards. You learn well about people in other cultures, and this gives you a much better understanding of the lives of people in other countries, such as children in the school in Africa with which Hungerford Primary has links. You know how to stay safe and healthy. We were impressed by how well you behave and look after one another. It was great to see how much you enjoy learning. Visiting lessons, we could see that this is because teachers make every effort to provide activities that are interesting and fun.

Your parents are very happy with the school and they were full of praise for the headteacher and the staff. We came to the same conclusion, as we saw how much effort everyone makes to ensure you get the best out of every minute in school. We agree with the school leaders that, to become even better, it would help to:

- give those of you who find the work easier new challenges so that you make even more progress
- find ways to help you to use your independence in lessons and to take more of a lead in activities.

You can help the school by setting yourselves challenging targets and by taking every opportunity to show initiative.

Yours faithfully

Rob Crompton

Lead Inspector