

Hunsdon Junior Mixed and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	117117
Local Authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	338952
Inspection dates	29–30 March 2010
Reporting inspector	John Carnaghan

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	89
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Robin Osterley
Headteacher	Mrs Joanne McGregor
Date of previous school inspection	13 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They saw eight lessons and four teachers and held meetings with governors, staff and pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's assessments, policies and records, including 54 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

recent evidence of the strength of current pupils' progress,

- how well the school promotes community cohesion internationally,
- whether target setting gives pupils clear and unambiguous information on their next steps in learning.

Information about the school

Hunsdon Junior Mixed and Infant School is much smaller than average. Almost all pupils are White British and all speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average, the largest group of these pupils has moderate learning difficulties.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Hunsdon Junior Mixed and Infant School provides a good education. It does most things very well and has a number of outstanding features. Chief amongst these is the excellent care it gives to all pupils and consistently powerful support for those who experience learning and personal difficulties. Pupils react very well to the school's positive ethos. Their behaviour is outstanding and they display excellent independence and co-operation from an early age.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with the expected levels of skills and aptitudes. They receive very good preparation for their subsequent education and make good progress, particularly in personal development, creative development and communications, language and literacy. Consistently effective teaching ensures that pupils continue their good progress across the school and they leave Year 6 with above average standards. Their achievement, including for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, is good.

Pupils, parents and carers think very highly of their school. Pupils delight in the friendly atmosphere and appreciate the lively teaching. One boy, typical of many, said, 'Teachers make things fun so we don't fall asleep.' Open channels of communication with parents are most effective. Parents' comments emphasise the high quality care provided, one saying, 'Hunsdon has nurtured my children. All staff are fair and show a great understanding of the children and families they deal with.'

The good curriculum is enlivened by numerous interesting visitors, trips to places of interest and special events, like the Lowry day seen during the inspection. The arts play a big part in school life and are much enjoyed. The school has good associations with the local community but is at an early stage of developing links with contrasting areas further afield. Lessons are lively, pacy and focus well on learning. Teachers relate very well to all pupils, calming those who may be too demanding and encouraging the quieter ones. This promotes good learning as well as developing in pupils a strong, balanced sense of their own worth. Marking is usually good but pupils are not always clear about exactly where they need to improve.

The headteacher and her staff work closely together to provide pupils with strong support and high quality education. There is a good capacity for sustained improvement. Self-evaluation is realistic, providing staff and governors with a clear picture of the school and this has led to the implementation of realistic, achievable plans for the future. Confident leadership and the shared drive for improvement has meant that the school has comprehensively addressed areas of concern raised in the previous inspection, most significantly that of inconsistent teaching.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By October 2010, develop its work on community cohesion by introducing links with schools in contrasting parts of the United Kingdom and the world.
 - By September 2010, provide pupils with clear, simple regularly updated targets for improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils start Year 1 with standards a little higher than those normally seen for their age. Their positive experiences in the Early Years Foundation Stage mean they enter the main school well prepared to move forwards. Consistently good teaching and pupils' great receptiveness means that progress in lessons in both key stages is good. By the time pupils leave Year 6, their standards are above average with very little variation between subjects. Strong support for those facing difficulties means that for all pupils, including those with moderate learning difficulties, achievement is good.

There is a happy atmosphere in lessons and about the school. Pupils who have arrived during the school year are favourably impressed by the warm welcome they receive. Behaviour is outstanding, pupils show strong consideration for one another, the older ones acting as buddies for young children in the playground. They report that there is virtually no bullying. They feel extremely safe having been very well briefed about potential dangers in the wider world, including those on the internet.

Most pupils are very aware that plenty of exercise and a good diet are important pre-requisites for growing up healthily. Many participate keenly in the good range of sports clubs available. The school council is active and raises money for good causes like disaster emergencies and to fund the two Indian children that the school sponsors. The school council's ideas are carefully listened to and acted upon by staff and governors and the latter sometimes attend its meetings. Pupils contribute well to village events, such as through supporting the local church. They make good progress developing skills for the future in computers, mathematics and English as well as in personal areas such as responsibility and independence. Their attendance is above average.

Pupils develop a strong sense of morality and have a keen sense of socially responsible behaviour. They show a good awareness of spiritual issues and their understanding of the multi-cultural aspects of their country is satisfactory, but developing.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

A lively curriculum provides stimulating opportunities to learn, often breaking down subject barriers, such as during the 're-enactment' of the Great Exhibition of 1851 in the school hall as the culmination to a multi-faceted study of Victorian Britain. The arts play a significant part, evidenced by the numerous vibrant displays of pupils' high quality paintings that brighten the school's classrooms and corridors.

The school works very successfully to overcome the possible limitations of its size and village setting. Visitors, from working journalists to African musicians and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, add spice and variety to learning experiences. Many pupils participate in local festivals, particularly in dance, which is a strength. Numerous trips, including a residential one, broaden pupils' horizons. The range of clubs and societies is popular and offers splendid opportunities for varied forms of exercise.

Effective monitoring and high expectations set by school leaders mean that teaching is consistently good. Some lessons are outstanding. Classrooms are lively, enjoyable places to be, where learning is fun and progress tangible. Pupils participate keenly in learning, showing great readiness to work in friendly collaboration with their teachers and fellow learners. From an early age pupils act responsibly, showing great independence and tremendous enjoyment, whether working alone, in pairs or in teams. Their good sense and unflappability means that lessons are very rarely interrupted by untoward behaviour.

Teachers know pupil's needs and personalities very well. They use this information to help plan interesting lessons that are adapted to challenge and support all abilities. They have good subject knowledge and their confidence 'rubs off' on pupils who are always

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keen to have a go. Perceptive questioning enables staff to monitor how well pupils are learning. Good assessment provides clear messages about pupils' progress. This information is used well to provide very effective interventions, largely from capable teaching assistants. Marking is usually good, giving clear advice where improvements can be made. Target setting is less sharp, so that while pupils may know their test levels, some are not fully aware of the next steps in learning.

Closely targeted support for pupils helps them to make the most of opportunities offered by the school. Staff knowledge of pupils ensures they pay close attention to all aspects of care and guidance, working collaboratively with families when required. Numerous pupils, including a number who join the school at other than the usual time, have been sympathetically helped to overcome barriers to their learning and personal development. The school judiciously uses advice and support available from outside agencies, such as specialists in speech and language therapy.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher works in close, amicable collaboration with all staff to ensure pupils receive high quality education and care. She leads the monitoring of the school and, working in partnership with others, has developed a very clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has improved outcomes for pupils, for example, more consistently effective teaching has promoted good progress across the school. Good monitoring also means that planning for the future is well rooted in reality. Assessment is very thorough, enabling the school to set challenging but realistic targets to promote higher standards. Effective assessment also provides early indications of where pupils may be falling behind and consequent interventions, whether short-term or long, are of high quality. The school's inclusive approach provides equal opportunity for all pupils and ensures there is no discrimination.

The school knows parents and carers very well. Close relationships ensure very good communication to and from home and parents report they are well informed about all aspects of school life. Outstanding links with parents and carers enable pupils to settle well when they enter the school and eases their worries when it is time to move on to secondary education.

The governing body has an excellent grasp of the school because governors regularly visit and monitor its activities. Their depth of understanding enables them to vigorously

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challenge the school. Their rigorous approach also extends to their safeguarding responsibilities. Safeguarding procedures and practices are excellent, all policies are up-to-date and any issues that arise are sensitively dealt with. The school puts safeguarding at the heart of what it does and takes all reasonable measures to ensure the health and safety of pupils.

The school recently reviewed its contribution to promoting community cohesion. The audit confirms the school has a good understanding of its setting and indicates strengths of current provision, which largely lie in its local connections. The school is developing links with schools in contrasting localities in this country and further afield.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children benefit from a variety of well-planned, interesting experiences and, in consequence, make good progress. Close liaison with the on-site pre-school group enables staff to get to know each child as she or he transfers into the school. Constructive relationships with parents ensure children quickly settle into this nurturing environment. Good teaching strikes the correct balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities and children quickly learn how to sit and listen on the carpet when required and to choose their own activities independently, working and playing happily with their friends. There are plenty of interesting opportunities to learn out of doors in safe play areas, such as when the youngest children enthusiastically dashed away to organise an Easter egg hunt for their friends. Children clearly enjoy their experiences and their excellent behaviour and positive attitudes testify to this.

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Children's progress is very effectively tracked and recorded. The quality of these checks enables adjustments to be made to each child's curriculum to address areas of potential concern. The strong provision and close collaboration between staff ensures good achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage and many children leave with above expected standards.

The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is confident and well-informed. Adults work harmoniously with a common sense of purpose. Self-evaluation is an element of everyday life and helps to maintain good provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The majority of parents returned the Ofsted questionnaires. Almost all were completely favourable in their responses. All were happy with their child's experiences and thought teaching and learning were good. A few parents expressed concerns over behaviour and progress but the inspection found no evidence to substantiate these views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hunsdon Junior Mixed and Infant School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 89 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	45	83	8	15	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	49	91	4	7	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	72	15	28	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	78	10	19	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	48	89	5	9	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	72	15	28	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	76	12	22	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	39	72	14	26	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	40	74	12	22	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	69	14	26	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	65	16	30	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	46	85	8	15	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	85	7	13	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



31 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hunsdon Junior Mixed and Infant School, Hunsdon, SG12 8NT

Thank you very much for the friendly welcome you gave to the inspectors when we recently visited your school. It was good to see how happy you are at Hunsdon. The inspectors think it is a good school and some elements are outstanding. The quality of care you are given is excellent and the inspectors were pleased that you feel so safe at school. We would like to congratulate you on your excellent behaviour, this really helps you to make good progress and your standards by the end of Year 6 are better than average.

You told us how much you enjoy lessons and we can see why! Teaching is good and lessons are lively and fun. The mixture of topics and subjects you study is also good. The headteacher and her team of dedicated staff work very well together to give you a good education. We have asked the school to improve two areas:

- there should be more links with schools in different parts of the country and abroad
- targets should be simple, clear and regularly updated so that you know what needs improving next. If you are unsure about this you should ask your teachers.

Once again, thanks for all your help. It was great meeting you,

Yours sincerely

John Carnaghan

Lead inspector

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