



Hungerford Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 111069
Local Authority Cheshire
Inspection number 288845
Inspection date 6 March 2007
Reporting inspector John Rutherford HMI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Crescent
School category	Community		Hungerford Road, Crewe
Age range of pupils	3–11		Cheshire CW1 5HA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01270 582408
Number on roll (school)	428	Fax number	01270 251085
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr W Bailey
		Headteacher	Mr R Lowe
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2001		

Age group	Inspection date	Inspection number
3–11	6 March 2007	288845

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school serves areas of mixed social and economic circumstances, with the balance towards the less advantaged. Very few pupils are from a minority ethnic group or have English as an additional language. A higher than average proportion of pupils has a statement for learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This includes additional provision for ten pupils with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties in what the school calls a 'special class'. The school has gained a number of national awards for its provision including: Inclusion Quality Mark, Activemark Gold, Artsmark Gold and the Healthy Schools Award.

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. The progress pupils make during their time in school and the standards they attain by the end of Year 6 have been significantly above average for the last three years. This is because the senior leadership confidently and clearly sets the direction for achieving excellence in pupils' achievement. It emphasises rigour in learning literacy and numeracy within a stimulating curriculum, every pupil knowing the next short steps required to make further progress, and a strong foundation for future learning in the early years. Senior leaders and subject coordinators systematically evaluate teaching and learning to support colleagues in maintaining this direction. The result is a consistency in very effective teaching across the school that enables most pupils to make outstanding progress between Foundation Stage and Year 6.

The impact of the consistently excellent work can be seen when walking around the school. The quality of pupils' work on display is of a very high standard and contributes to an attractive, stimulating learning environment. Teachers are dedicated to providing an exciting education for pupils, well matched to their needs. Therefore, work is often given more relevance by a visit to a place of interest or the lesson starts with an activity that strongly motivates the pupils to learn more. In lessons, pupils know exactly what they need to achieve to make progress and this is carefully adapted to meet their differing needs. They are also clear about their personal targets and what they need to do to attain them. As this area of work is such a high priority for the school, teachers are still seeking to improve it even further.

In the Foundation Stage there is a very strong focus on children learning the skills of using language, working independently and working as part of a larger group: these are crucial factors in supporting their future learning. Pupils who are at risk of falling behind in these skills are immediately given very effective additional support to help them make good progress. In Key Stage 1, teachers are concentrating on improving pupils' reading for enjoyment and understanding and, in Key Stage 2, the priority is to increase skills in writing for a range of different purposes. These are not weaknesses, but the school has correctly identified that they are the most important areas to work on to ensure that pupils attain the same very high standard in all subjects.

Pupils of all abilities make very good progress because the work is carefully tailored to their needs. Higher attainers receive a considerable amount of interesting additional challenge following a recommendation for this in the previous inspection. Pupils in the special class make very good progress because their learning is combined with very good support for their social and emotional development. Throughout the school, well-trained teaching assistants provide very good academic support and personal guidance to help groups of all abilities to achieve more. Parents are helped to support their children's learning, which is a good improvement since the last inspection. The school has the full support of the overwhelming majority of parents.

An excellent curriculum provides pupils with many opportunities to extend their academic learning through practical activities, investigations and work out of school.

The curriculum also makes an outstanding contribution to pupils' personal development and this is supported by the extra-curricular programme and the general guidance given to pupils. Pupils learn to make the right choices in relation to their health and safety and to manage major events in their lives. They develop a very good understanding of how society works and how they can contribute. They have a very interesting introduction to the adult world of work which, combined with their excellent achievement, provides a solid foundation for their future economic well-being.

The governors make a very strong contribution to the leadership and management of the school, particularly in supporting financial planning and in monitoring the progress of priorities in the school development plan. Their support and challenge helps the school to provide very good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

The school is currently working on three priorities for improvement.

- The use of assessment to help all pupils make even better progress.
- Reading for enjoyment and understanding in Key Stage 1.
- Writing in Key Stage 2.

Although these priorities do not relate to areas of significant weakness, the inspection confirms them as the appropriate next steps for raising attainment to even higher levels. No additional issues are identified.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement is outstanding and they attain very high standards. At the end of Key Stage 2, the progress made by pupils and the standards they attain have been significantly above national averages for the last three years.

Children's attainment when they start school in the Foundation Stage is broadly below average, although the ability range is very wide. Many children have lower than expected levels of language and social development. They receive very effective support and this, combined with very good teaching for all the children, raises standards to the national average level by the end of the Foundation Stage. Pupils continue to make very good progress and by the end of Key Stage 1 they attain above average standards. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards have risen further to significantly above average.

Higher attaining pupils achieve very well as a result of the additional challenge in their work. The impact can be seen in the above average proportions of pupils attaining the highest level in the national Key Stage 2 English, mathematics and science tests. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress in both key stages and many attain the expected standard for their age. Each year, two or three pupils in the special class take the end of Key Stage 2 national tests and almost always achieve the average standard or higher.

The school's evaluation of teaching and learning has identified two priorities for improving achievement and standards even further. These are reading for enjoyment and understanding in Key Stage 1 and writing in Key Stage 2. The data from pupils' performance in national tests and assessments confirm the selection of these areas.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. They enjoy school very much and their attendance is above the national average. They have very good attitudes to their work. Their behaviour in class and around school is exemplary. Pupils in the special class are making very good progress in taking control of their feelings and behaviour. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They can talk confidently about how each individual is special and how important it is to reassure people of this when they are lacking confidence. They gain a good understanding of crime in society by discussing real-life problems with a teaching assistant. Through their art, music and dance they are developing a very good understanding of other cultures.

As a result of the excellent guidance to pupils, they know how to make good choices in relation to their health, hygiene and safety, particularly when faced with pressure from others. They feel safe in school because anti-bullying has been given such a high profile by the school council. If problems do occur, they know who to turn to for help and they are confident of immediate support. Year 6 pupils have their anxiety about going to secondary school reduced because a teaching assistant provides a course to help them manage the change. Pupils gain very good experience of contributing to the community when they act as 'buddies' to younger pupils following play-leader training. They also learn how litter and pollution damages their local environment and how it can be avoided. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the adult world of work by visiting a nearby college of further education to sample activities such as bricklaying, engineering and hairdressing.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. In the early years classes, carefully planned, purposeful play, with an emphasis on developing language and social skills, gives the pupils a very good foundation on which to build their future learning. An 'early intervention' mentor provides very effective support to a large number of pupils and the impact is seen most strongly in the improvement of their speaking skills.

Throughout the school, teachers make learning enjoyable for the pupils by their enthusiasm and by planning very interesting activities for them. A good example is the use of a film to inspire pupils to use more ambitious words in their writing. Very

effective lesson planning and recent developments in the use of assessment help pupils to make very good progress in lessons. Teachers ensure that pupils understand the purpose of each lesson and what they need to do to show that they have achieved it. This is accurately adapted to suit the differing needs of each ability group. Teachers give pupils regular feedback on their progress and how they can improve further by discussing their

work with them or by including helpful comments when marking. This use of assessment is beginning to be effective and teachers are seeking to improve it further.

Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to pupils' progress by leading discussion during group activities. This helps pupils to develop their thinking and speaking skills. They also provide very good guidance to groups of average attaining pupils, giving them the confidence to strive for higher standards. Pupils respond very well to high quality teaching. They show determination to achieve their objectives within the lesson and they think of creative, interesting ideas when planning their own work. They demonstrate good independent study skills; for example, when Year 2 pupils use the contents and index of a reference book to find information for themselves.

The school has made a good response to the recommendation in the previous inspection report that parents should be better enabled to support their children's learning. Through workshops and sending newsletters and information about targets home, the school regularly informs parents about what their children are learning and how they can support this. Parents receive detailed reports about their children's progress and they are invited to discuss these with teachers. Three fifths of the parents returned a questionnaire for this inspection and none raised a concern about the issue.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an outstanding curriculum. Pupils make very good progress in English and mathematics because their learning is linked to very interesting activities in other subjects. Year 2 pupils, for example, extended their reading skills when carrying out research to get ready for a visit to an animal park. Year 6 pupils developed very good writing skills when preparing a report of their science experiments. Pupils attain very high standards in mathematics and science because of the emphasis on problem solving and carrying out practical investigations.

A very rich selection of arts, sports, dance and modern languages within the curriculum and the extra-curricular programme give pupils the opportunity to develop a wide range of skills and interests. Residential and day trips, often arranged through partnership with other organisations, extend pupils' experience of outdoor pursuits, adult occupations and community issues such as litter and pollution. An extensive list of visitors to the school brings pupils into contact with experts and performers who enrich their learning. The curriculum is very well adapted to meet the needs of different ability groups. For the more able pupils, additional challenges have been arranged in a number of subjects, and this helps them to attain very high standards. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified at an early stage and appropriate

programmes of work help them to make very good progress. A particular strength is the curriculum in the special class which provides a mixture of skills teaching and personal development, carefully tailored to each pupil's individual needs.

In the Foundation Stage, pupils experience all the required areas of learning on a continuous basis and there is a good balance between activities that are led by adults and those that are chosen independently by children. Provision for outdoor learning is very good.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support provided for pupils are outstanding. The school policy that each teacher keeps their class for two years helps them to meet the academic and personal development needs of their pupils very accurately. The school has recently developed an effective process for monitoring pupils' progress in relation to national expectations. The next task is to refine this further to help teachers to identify more clearly which pupils need additional support and to check how much difference this support is making. The school places considerable emphasis on each pupil knowing the next steps in their learning. As a result, many pupils can talk about their personal short-term targets for improving their attainment. Teachers give pupils useful guidance on how well they are meeting their targets and what more they still need to do. As this is such an important part of the school's philosophy, teachers are seeking to improve this aspect of their work even further.

The support for pupils' well-being is very good. Staff have taken account of views expressed by pupils and made sure that they all know who to go to if they have a concern. Pupils receive guidance on a wide range of health, safety and economic well-being issues through the school's links with the local environmental health team, a life education organisation and a nearby college. They learn much about democracy and crime from courses provided by a teaching assistant. A nurse works in the school each week to provide guidance on health and safety matters. Staff collaborate effectively with outside agencies to help pupils in the special class to develop the personal and social skills they need in order to return fully to mainstream education. Child protection arrangements are in place to ensure that all adults who come into contact with the pupils are suitable.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Leadership at all levels is outstanding. The clear direction provided by senior leaders is seen in the way that school development planning improves teaching and learning. By concentrating on three main priorities only within a year, it ensures that staff are not dealing with too many changes at once. Priorities are only selected if the school's thorough evaluation of teaching and learning indicates that they are necessary for raising pupils' achievement.

The school has a systematic approach to developing the skills of teachers with leadership responsibilities and delegating significant roles to them. This provides the school with a very good capacity to sustain its success in the future. The school also helps teaching assistants to make a very strong contribution through a well-planned approach to their performance management and professional development.

A strength in the school leadership is that it is outward looking in securing the highest quality of provision for its pupils. Teachers are given very good opportunities to work in partnership with colleagues from other primary schools to develop more effective approaches to teaching and learning. The school is also establishing good partnerships with care agencies as part of developing a more extended role in providing for the personal development and well-being of its pupils.

Governors make a very good contribution to leadership and management. They work closely with the school's leadership team to ensure that the school has good staffing, accommodation and resources. They closely monitor the implementation of the school improvement plan and hold the school to account for reaching agreed targets.

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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
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 behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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.

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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	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

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I came to inspect your school, especially for taking the time to talk to me and show me your work. This was very useful and gave me a good picture of what you learn. I was very impressed by the high quality of your work on display around the school. I would like to say a special thank you to the pupils who I joined to eat my lunch. I would now like to tell you about my judgements.

Your school is outstanding. This is because the headteacher and all the staff help you to make excellent progress and achieve very high standards in your work. They do this by making sure that your lessons are very interesting and that you know what you have to do to improve your work. You confirmed this when you told me how much you enjoy your lessons and how you always feel happy to ask your teacher for more help. Your teaching assistants are especially helpful in giving you extra support. The staff also give you very good guidance on how to lead your lives. You told me how you can make the right choices about your health and safety, and how you are developing a good understanding of the world outside school. Your governors deserve a special mention because they help you in many ways, especially by making sure that you have a super building and plenty of good equipment. And, of course, you deserve a lot of credit as well for working so hard and for your excellent behaviour.

Your headteacher and staff give you an excellent school, but they are determined that it will be even better. To do this they are working hard to make sure that you all have good targets to work towards and you know how to achieve them. They also want your reading and writing to be even better than it already is. You are going to have to work very hard to help them to achieve this, and I am sure that you will. Very best wishes for the future.