

Huxley CofE Primary School

Church Lane, Huxley, Chester, CH3 9BH

Inspection dates 30 June – 1 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 vary significantly from year-to-year because pupil numbers are so small. Nevertheless, pupils of all abilities make good progress from their varied starting points. Their achievement is good.
- Pupils of all abilities feel good about their accomplishments and involvement in school life. They get plenty of encouragement and opportunities to take part and succeed in a broad range of subjects and activities.
- The support and care given to pupils who have special educational needs is a notable strength. Pupils who find aspects of learning difficult get focused teaching and do exceptionally well at Huxley CofE Primary.
- Teaching in all classes is good. Teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is strong. Each pupil gets a lot of individual attention.
- Teachers' marking, especially in English, is effective. Pupils get regular feedback about how well they are doing and pay attention to the advice they receive.
- Phonics (letters and sounds) teaching, in particular, is well organised, brisk and purposeful.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils are proud of their school. They show respect, concern and care for one another and work hard. Their attitudes towards others are exemplary.
- Pupils feel very safe at school. They say that everyone is friendly and adults and other pupils will always help them, if needs be. No-one can recall any incidents of bullying.
- The headteacher and governors have built up a capable team. All play an important part in maintaining good standards and driving further improvements.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school and its work; 100% of respondents to the inspection survey would recommend this school to other parents.
- Participation and achievement in physical education, sport and after-school activity is a remarkable strength. Pupils enjoy many sports and have experienced success in competitive events.
- Early years provision is good. As soon as they start school, children benefit from effective teaching that nurtures their talents and interests.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- At times, teaching does not build carefully enough on what pupils already know. This happens more often in mathematics than in other subjects.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics across Key Stage 2 is not as strong as the progress they make in reading and writing.
- Some older pupils present their work with insufficient care.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classrooms and some that was taking place outside. Several of these observations were carried out alongside the headteacher. The inspector also listened to pupils reading, examined pupils' work in books and on display, checked the school website and considered test and assessment data.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour, and the school's procedures for managing it, at the beginning and end of the school day, at lunch and break times and at an after-school club.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, school leaders, subject leaders and governors. A telephone conversation with a local authority adviser took place.
- By the end of the inspection, there were 24 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspector looked at these, talked to some parents at school and checked the school's routines for gathering parents' views. In addition, 13 responses to Ofsted's school staff questionnaire were taken into consideration.
- The inspector examined a number of school documents. These included: information about pupils' progress; the school's own evaluations of its work; school improvement plans; and information about the work of the governing body. Records relating to staff performance management, behaviour, attendance, safety and safeguarding were also scrutinised.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Huxley CofE Primary School is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in three classes: one class for Reception and Years 1 and 2, one for Years 3 and 4, and one for Years 5 and 6.
- Most of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils at the school is below the national average. The term disadvantaged pupils is used to describe those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority. These pupils receive additional support from pupil premium funding.
- The proportion of pupils that join or leave the school at other than the usual times is well above the national average.
- The school provides full-time early years provision in the Reception class.
- The headteacher is also the headteacher at Uktinton St Paul's CE Primary School and the two separate schools have developed a working partnership.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has appointed two new teachers in Key Stage 2 and a third class has been created. This third class, for Years 5 and 6, is in a very small room.
- The small numbers in each year group mean that the government's floor standards do not apply.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the progress pupils make across Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics, by making sure that:
 - in lessons, teachers check carefully to see how well all pupils understand so they can refine classroom tasks or explanations to meet their learning needs with greater precision and efficiency
 - expectations for the presentation of pupils' work are consistently high, particularly in upper Key Stage 2.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher demonstrates a proven ability to lead and inspire others. She has overseen numerous changes at the school, and within the leadership structure, while maintaining high staff morale and good standards of achievement and behaviour. Her infectious enthusiasm, approachable manner and high expectations have helped to develop leadership qualities in other staff and ensure that everyone does their best. Staff, governors and parents report high levels of confidence in her abilities and commitment to ongoing school improvement.
- The headteacher's role as leader of another small school and the subsequent partnership that has evolved between the two schools has brought several benefits. It has helped to develop the leadership skills of teachers at Huxley. When the headteacher is not on site, a very able senior teacher takes on the day-to-day running of the school. In this capacity, she makes regular checks on teaching and learning and has an increased influence on school improvement. All other staff hold key leadership roles and they, too, manage these with efficiency and a sense of shared purpose. Other advantages of the two-school partnership include the sharing of expertise, training and curriculum planning. By working together in this way, good ideas, staff skills and middle leadership all have a wider reach.
- Providing all pupils with an equal opportunity to take part and develop into confident and productive members of society is a stated school aim, and one which successfully underpins much of the school's everyday work. In all subjects, pupils encourage each other, recognising and applauding excellence while also nurturing talent and offering support when difficulties arise. No-one is left out or made to feel unwelcome or uncomfortable. Relationships are good and pupils say they are treated fairly.
- Pupils' classroom studies in a broad range of subjects are frequently enriched by trips and visits, including residential trips for all classes. In order to help older pupils understand the democratic process, for example, they visited the Houses of Parliament. Younger pupils have explored the Snowdonia area of Wales as part of their geography work. In addition, pupils of all ages find out about local and distant traditions and make numerous trips to museums, sites of interest and various places of worship. Such activities provide memorable experiences. They help pupils to learn about life and beliefs in different parts of Britain today and the way that communities throughout the world change over time.
- The primary school sport funding has been put to excellent use. In recent times, the range of different physical activities on offer has increased and many pupils take part in after-school sport and frequent tournaments. In fact, the high level of participation, with some notable successes, is remarkable. It is not just the extra money that has made such a difference; the highly effective leadership of physical education and sport has been a key factor in driving forward significant developments and improving staff and pupils' skills in this area. Other funds, such as the pupil premium, are also used well to improve aspects of provision and boost the achievement of targeted pupils.
- The local authority classifies the school as one requiring only a minimal level of support, although the school has chosen to take part in some local authority training. In addition, school leaders recently commissioned a school review by an educational consultant. This external advice has helped leaders keep an evaluative watch on the school's performance and development.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements and are effective. Paperwork and training are kept up-to-date and staff know what action to take if they have concerns about a child's welfare or safety.
- Pupils have a say in how some things are done at school. They know they will be listened to and that everyone's opinion and viewpoint needs to be considered so that fair decisions can be made. They display responsible attitudes and a confident ability to make the most of the opportunities that come their way, both now and in the future.
- Parents hold the school in high regard. All the parents who responded to the online questionnaire would recommend the school to others. Parents spoken to during this inspection were full of praise for the school and its work to educate and care for their children.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. The governing body has a well-informed understanding of the day-to-day life of the school and a strategic eye on future developments. The Chair of the Governing Body brings a calm, measured and objective approach to the leadership of governance.
 - Governors understand what school assessment data tell them about pupils' achievement. They can also describe how the school's newly adopted assessment system will give them more detailed information about pupils' progress and help to identify any patterns that might emerge.
 - Since the previous inspection, governors have managed a lot of changes at the school, notably a partnership arrangement with another primary school, changes to the leadership structure, the

appointment of new teaching staff and the creation of a third classroom. In making these changes, governors have always looked to preserve the school's strengths while embracing change for the better. The strong local support for the school and increase in pupil numbers indicate that their actions have been successful. Nevertheless, while the school makes best use of the available space, governors appreciate that the small room currently being used as a classroom for Year 5 and 6 pupils is not an ideal long-term arrangement.

- Governors look at pupils' work, visit classrooms and receive informative reports about the quality of teaching. They check that their policy for managing and, if needs be, improving staff performance is being applied in practice.
- When summing up governors' view of the school, one governor said, 'In this school no-one is able to hide. Everyone gets involved in everything because they have to and everyone is supported and challenged to do their best.' Inspection evidence supports this view.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. During their time at school, pupils learn to value everyone's contribution. They accept one another's differences without question and are sensitive, supportive and considerate in their actions and words. In short, their attitudes to others are exemplary.
- Around the school, and in lessons, conduct is calm and orderly and good manners are the norm. Pupils are polite and helpful to visitors, and attentive and respectful to staff. They understand the school rules and are involved in creating some of them. They understand the difference between right and wrong, and this understanding guides their behaviour.
- Attitudes to learning are also positive. Pupils are keen to learn and invariably work hard. Some work, however, particularly that of a few older pupils, is set down without sufficient care and attention.
- Some pupils have very specific needs and require help, support and understanding to manage their behaviour so that they can make the most of school. Staff and pupils show remarkable calm and patience. The skill with which pupils' behaviour is managed and the sensible understanding shown by all pupils means that learning and school life proceed without disruption. There is no doubt that some pupils who have struggled to cope elsewhere have come to Huxley CofE Primary and thrived. Parents and pupils speak positively about the school's supportive way of working.
- Most pupils wear full school uniform and their attendance is regular and punctual.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils are aware that bullying of any sort is unacceptable. They can explain what they would do to stop it if it happened, but no-one can recall any incidents of such unkind or unpleasant behaviour. Any upsets or disagreements that do occur are usually resolved quickly and sensibly.
- Policies and procedures for identifying and managing risk are up-to-date and staff understand what they need to do to keep pupils safe. Similarly, pupils are taught how to stay safe in different situations and are given additional guidance through school-based training courses about safe cycling or internet safety.
- First-aid arrangements and procedures for recording accidents and the use of medicines in school are as they should be. Currently, school leaders are making sure that all staff are equally well informed about requirements.
- The school site is kept secure and supervision levels are good. Arrangements when pupils are arriving and leaving school have been thought through carefully.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils in all classes benefit from good teaching. Lesson planning is well informed and teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is strong. All staff promote optimistic and ambitious attitudes, both to schoolwork and life beyond school.
- The teaching of phonics is particularly well organised and effective. No time is wasted, activities are purposeful, and adults and pupils display an enthusiastic enjoyment of sounds, letters, words and reading. Indeed, across the school, plenty of attention is given to developing pupils' reading and literacy skills. Teachers regularly read to pupils and provide them with many good reasons to read, write and develop

their skills. Consequently, pupils' achievement in reading and writing has improved over time.

- All staff adhere to the school's agreed marking policy and pupils of all ages can explain how it helps them to reflect on their work and make improvements. Most days, pupils are given time to go through previous work and consider the advice they have been given. Without exception, pupils use this time productively, as is evident from the work in their books. English books, in particular, highlight the effectiveness of the school's approach to marking.
- While the school's routines for checking completed work are efficient and consistent, checks made during lessons are not always as timely or carefully targeted as they could be. When pupils get stuck because they do not understand or complete a task quickly, teaching staff usually notice this at the time and adjust their teaching accordingly. However, sometimes this does not happen and learning does not press on as swiftly as it might. Checks made during this inspection found that this was not a common occurrence but did happen more in Key Stage 2 mathematics than in other subjects.
- Having said this, the teaching of mathematics has many strengths. Teachers create interesting tasks for pupils that require them to solve problems, apply reasoning and persevere. The challenge provided for the most-able pupils is increasingly ambitious, and is reflected in the higher standards now being reached by these pupils.
- Presentation of work in books and pupils' handwriting can be excellent, as is seen in many books in Years 3 and 4 and Key Stage 1. The standard of presentation in Years 5 and 6, however, is erratic; at times it is careful but, at other times, it is casual or careless.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- The very small numbers in each year group mean that standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 vary significantly from year to year. The attainment of just one pupil can cause test statistics to veer between well above and well below average. Additionally, the high proportion of pupils that join or leave the school at other than the usual times also has an effect on test statistics. Nevertheless, over time, pupils' progress from their very varied starting points is good. Pupils of all abilities achieve well at this school and some pupils do exceptionally well.
- While standards vary, the rate of progress in early years and Key Stage 1, and in reading and writing at Key Stage 2, has continued to strengthen since the previous inspection. Progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2, has not been quite so strong. One of the key reasons for this is because teachers' checks on learning in mathematics in Years 3 to 6 are not always careful enough.
- The number of disadvantaged pupils in the school is small so a comparison between their attainment and progress, and that of other pupils in the school or nationally, would not be appropriate or meaningful. However, these pupils benefit from good teaching and additional pupil premium funded support and, in line with their peers, they too make good progress.
- Currently, the proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs makes up about one quarter of the school. These pupils get excellent support, often with specialist input, and all experience success. In some instances, pupils who have struggled to cope at other schools have flourished in the nurturing, attentive environment provided at Huxley CofE Primary. Whatever their particular needs, all pupils are included in all that happens at school.
- The most-able pupils are also challenged to do their best. In lessons, they are made to think hard and work seen in the current Year 6 books shows equally strong performance in English and mathematics work. Over time, however, the brightest pupils in Key Stage 2 have tended to do better in reading and writing than in mathematics.

The early years provision

is good

- Children start school with levels of knowledge and skill that vary significantly from one year to the next. With such small numbers, where in some instances one child may constitute 50% of a year group, there is no typical intake. Similarly, statistical comparisons between the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of early years at Huxley CofE Primary and nationally, are largely meaningless.
- It is, however, possible to see the good progress that children make during their first year at school. In fact, some children make exceptionally strong progress across different areas of learning and start Year 1 well ahead of others nationally. Equally, some children need a lot of extra support because their level of development lags some way behind that of others. Whatever the case, children get the provision they

need. They benefit from consistently good teaching that nurtures and develops their skills and interests.

- Children's good and improving achievement in early years is driven by capable teamwork and strong leadership. The conscientious early years leader has an excellent understanding of how children learn and all staff have access to regular training so they stay up-to-date and keep their skills sharp.
- Arrangements for gathering information about children's achievements and needs before they start school work well. Following on from this, the arrangements for supporting them when they do start school, and for tracking their progress, are second to none. Staff record keeping is meticulous and routines to assist the flow of information between home and school – both formal and informal – are very efficient. Detailed journals are compiled about each child. These not only identify the next steps in learning with precision but also provide high-quality lasting mementos of each child's first year at school.
- Behaviour is good. All children learn to listen, share, take turns and cooperate. Indeed, the successful attention to their personal development and social skills means that they start in Year 1 with good learning habits and supportive attitudes towards others.
- Relationships are friendly and relaxed, but expectations are high and children are kept safe. Children are given every opportunity to do their best in many different ways and their joy of learning, discovery and creativity is clear to see.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	111286
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	461705

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	43
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Ratledge
Headteacher	Lorna Pleavin
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2012
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