



West Huntspill Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123696
LEA Somerset
Inspection number 281542
Inspection dates 19 October 2005 to 19 October 2005
Reporting inspector Laurie Lewin RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	New Road
School category	Community		West Huntspill
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Highbridge, Somerset TA9 3QE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01278 783842
Number on roll	135	Fax number	01278 786 200
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr John Cross
Date of previous inspection	6 December 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Caroline Lancey

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

West Huntspill Primary School is a small rural school between Bridgwater and Burnham-on-Sea. Around half of the pupils come from socially disadvantaged home backgrounds. The proportion of pupils in the school with learning difficulties or disabilities is slightly below the national average, but the proportion with statements of learning disability is. The school has an autistic resource base which currently provides specialist teaching for six pupils with particularly complex learning difficulties. Nearly all of the pupils in the school are from White British backgrounds, with a very small number coming from other minority ethnic backgrounds. A very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language. The attainment of children on entry to school is below average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school feels that it is doing an adequate job, but the inspection found there are too many weaknesses to confirm this view and the school does not therefore provide satisfactory value for money. Poor leadership and management have allowed standards to decline steadily over the last five years.

Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage, but in other years, progress is erratic and standards are too low by the time pupils reach Year 6. This is because teaching has weaknesses. Teachers form good supportive relationships with pupils. However, they do not provide work that matches the needs of pupils precisely enough and expectations for pupils' achievement are set too low. Teachers do not make enough use of assessment information to help pupils make the gains that they should as they move through the school. The school's curriculum does not match well with the needs and interests of pupils and does not always ensure that they build on their learning step by step.

Over the last four terms of leading the school on a temporary basis, the deputy headteacher has worked effectively to improve things. In the few weeks she has been in post, the new headteacher has made a good start. Working well with the deputy headteacher, she has put a range of good initiatives in place to get the school moving forward. However, it is still too early to see the impact of these initiatives and to show that the school has the capacity for sustained improvement in the future. Overall, the school has not made enough progress since it was last inspected. Systems for the school to evaluate its own performance accurately are not established well enough.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science
- Ensure that the teaching and curriculum provision meets the needs of all pupils
- Improve systems and procedures for evaluating how well it is performing
- Make full use of the information gained from checking pupils' progress to improve planning and provide challenging work in lessons.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards have declined steadily over the last five years and are currently too low. The achievement of pupils overall is inadequate. Results in the Year 6 English, mathematics and science national tests show the school to be amongst the lowest performing 10% of schools nationally. Pupils do not make enough progress year on year and do not achieve the targets set for their performance by the time they reach

the end of Year 6. Children begin school showing below average attainment. Although they make a sound start and progress at a satisfactory rate in the Foundation Stage, most do not reach the expected levels in all of the areas of learning for this age group by the time they start Year 1. Progress is erratic for pupils in Years 1 and 2, but satisfactory overall. Progress is inadequate for pupils in Years 3 to 6 and too few pupils achieve the levels of which they are capable. Work seen by inspectors in lessons shows that pupils are not all sufficiently challenged by the tasks they are given to do.

Almost all groups of pupils, including those from other minority ethnic backgrounds, do not make as much progress as they should. However, those with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language, generally benefit from the support they receive. Pupils progress well in the school's autistic resource base. As a result, some of them integrate successfully into the main school for much of their time.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils generally enjoy school and show positive attitudes. Their behaviour is satisfactory and they are generally polite and well mannered. Pupils say that there are occasional incidents of bullying, but these are rapidly sorted out. They feel that behaviour has improved in recent times. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is satisfactory. Pupils particularly appreciate the regular sessions that teachers provide for them to discuss any areas of concern. They say ... 'these sessions are good because they calm us all down when we are too excited'. Pupils carry out jobs such as helping younger ones in the playground in a responsible way. They gain a secure awareness of the world around them through the charitable fund raising activities with which they are involved.

Through activities that staff provide, pupils gain a reasonable understanding of how to keep themselves safe and develop a healthy lifestyle. However, they do not make enough progress with acquiring basic skills in subjects such as mathematics to help them learn, for example, how to use money sensibly.

Attendance figures show that there is too much absence. Through introducing more rigorous check ups, the new headteacher has made progress with improving this.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Overall, the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory because pupils do not make enough progress with their learning. Teachers explain tasks clearly so that pupils know what to do in lessons. Staff have good relationships with pupils who say they feel they are well supported and encouraged. Lesson plans do not include a precise focus on designing tasks that fit the wide range of pupils' needs and work set is often too low level and undemanding. While the school records and tracks pupils' progress carefully,

teachers do not make enough use of this information to guide their lesson planning or set targets for pupils to work towards. As a result, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. The extra support that staff provide for individuals with learning difficulties or disabilities is successful in helping pupils to stay focused and work with confidence. The effective support given to pupils who attend the school's autistic resource centre enables these individuals to successfully reintegrate into classes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

Curriculum provision is unsatisfactory. The school's planning system ensures that full coverage is given to all subjects, but it is not sufficiently tailored to meet the needs and interests of the pupils. The planning does not always help pupils to build on their learning in a step by step fashion. For example, physical education work seen was not linked well with work that had been taught last year. The amount of teaching time in the school week is below that recommended nationally and this hampers the amount of work that pupils can accomplish. The school is currently taking action to address this.

The school makes sound provision within the curriculum for ensuring pupils learn how to stay fit and healthy and provides a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities and visits that the pupils say they really enjoy. Pupils gain a sound awareness of the dangers of drug abuse, but the school does not currently provide them with an appropriate programme of sex education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

A satisfactory range of support, care and guidance procedures ensures that pupils stay safe and secure. There are secure child protection arrangements in place. However, the school does not have formalised systems to ensure that risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis. Pupils who have any worries or concerns feel confident to approach an adult. Staff know the pupils well and cater sensitively for their social needs. The headteacher has worked well with the staff in recent times to help promote a consistent approach to promoting good behaviour – as a result, behaviour has improved.

The school maintains accurate records to show pupils' progress, but there are no clear whole school systems to set targets for individuals and to guide them precisely as to how they can improve their work in the future. A new system currently being piloted in Years 2 and 3 by the headteacher and class teacher shows a promising start being made in this area.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Poor leadership and management have allowed standards to steadily decline over the last five years. The deputy headteacher worked well during her four term phase as acting headteacher, and got things moving to begin the process of addressing outstanding issues from the last inspection. The new headteacher has made a good start and, in the few weeks she has been at the school, has set in motion promising new initiatives that have helped improve attendance and behaviour. She has also made a successful start with helping staff improve their lesson planning and systems for checking pupils' progress. Subject co-ordinators are fully involved in constructing action plans, but still have some way to go in developing their ability to use assessment information to help drive up the quality of provision and standards. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together. However, it is still too early to see if their actions result in sustained improvement and the school's capacity for improvement therefore remains unsatisfactory overall.

Governors understand the school's current needs and have maintained full links with the local education authority to bring about the recent changes and help get the school back on track. Governors do not have formalised systems to help them monitor the school's performance. The headteacher has correctly identified that there are several important statutory policies that the governors need to put in place, for example concerning the school's approach to equality and how sex education is taught.

The school has yet to establish a systematic approach towards its self-evaluation – to ensure the evaluation is accurate and takes account of the views of all members of the school community.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	No	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	4	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	No
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	No
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	No
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

West Huntspill Primary School New Road West Huntspill Somerset TA9 3QE

20 October 2005

Dear Pupils

I am writing to let you know how much we enjoyed coming to visit your school. Thank you for making us so welcome and helping us during the school's inspection. We especially enjoyed hearing about the activities you said you enjoyed such as the residential visit at Kilve.

Here are a few of the most important things we want you to know.

You pay attention in lessons and show interest in the work you do.

Your school is a friendly place and behaviour is satisfactory.

You like your teachers and you told us that they give you lots of encouragement.

You appreciate the after school activities the school provides and the visits and trips that you make out of school.

You are keen to help each other and you carry out special responsibilities sensibly.

We think the school does a satisfactory job of taking care of you.

We think that teachers need to help you progress more rapidly and reach a higher standard in your work. They need to make the curriculum better and more interesting for you. We feel that teachers need to use the information they get from checking your progress to make better plans for your lessons. Lastly, we think there should be a lot more involvement of everybody at the school, including you, in discussing how well things are going and what could be improved.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly when we came to see you.

Yours faithfully

Laurie Lewin Lead inspector