



Inspection Report

**Better
education
and care**

Unique Reference Number 123751
LEA Somerset
Inspection number 281551
Inspection dates 28 June 2006 to 29 June 2006
Reporting inspector Chris Nye HMI

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

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|------------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| Type of school | Primary | School address | Lower Street |
| School category | Voluntary controlled | | Curry Mallet |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 | | Taunton, Somerset TA3 6TA |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed | Telephone number | 01823 480421 |
| Number on roll | 61 | Fax number | 01823 480421 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body | Chair of governors | |
| Date of previous inspection | 3 April 2000 | Headteacher | Mrs Alison Whitman |

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|-----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
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Introduction

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

Description of the school

The school serves the village of Curry Mallet and the surrounding rural area. It is much smaller than average and all the classes contain pupils from two or more year groups. Pupils are of White British origin and currently no pupils claim free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average, but the proportion of those with statements is in line with the national average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Curry Mallet is an effective school which gives good value for money. It evaluates its own performance accurately and judges its overall effectiveness as good. The inspection confirms this view.

The school has many strengths and is tackling with determination the few weaknesses that exist. The school has strong links with other local schools and the church. The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. Because of this, and the good teaching, pupils feel safe and happy, behave very well and make good overall progress. In Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in writing and mathematics and good progress in reading. In Key Stage 2, they make good progress. Almost all pupils achieve the expected levels in English, mathematics and science and many exceed them.

The provision in the Foundation Stage is good because the teaching is good, children's needs are identified early and they are well cared for. Most children make satisfactory progress, particularly in communication, language and literacy.

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school and leadership and management are effective because the headteacher, governors and staff work closely together and are committed to raising standards.

Most of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection have been fully dealt with, although assessment systems do not always make it sufficiently clear to pupils how they can improve their work. The school's capacity to improve is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1.
- Develop assessment systems so that pupils are clearer about how they can improve their work.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Overall, achievement and standards are good, but they are better in Key Stage 2 than in the Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1.

Children enter the Foundation Stage with average levels of attainment. Because numbers are small and individual needs are rapidly identified and supported, particularly in communication, language and literacy, they achieve expected levels of attainment in all the areas of learning by the time they transfer to Key Stage 1.

In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in reading and satisfactory progress in writing and mathematics. By the end of the key stage most achieve, but few exceed, expected standards in writing and mathematics. In reading, however, because pupils demonstrate an enthusiasm for a wide range of children's literature, many are achieving standards well above those expected for their age.

The school's own assessment data indicate that pupils throughout Key Stage 2 make good progress in English, mathematics and science and routinely meet the challenging targets set for them by the time they transfer to secondary school. In 2005, almost all pupils taking national tests achieved the expected level for their age in English, with many exceeding this. In mathematics and science, most pupils achieved standards above those expected for their age.

Pupils who find learning difficult are very well supported and make outstanding progress because their needs are accurately identified and they are supported early on in their time in school. The school also ensures that pupils who are gifted or talented are suitably challenged and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils' personal development and well-being is good. Pupils' behaviour in class and around school is outstanding. They are well mannered, and, because they are well motivated, they enjoy their learning and display very positive attitudes. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good as a result of the provision made by the school, such as well planned assemblies which encourage reflection. Attendance is good and both authorised and unauthorised absences are below national averages.

The school has introduced a number of strategies which successfully encourage pupils to adopt healthy lifestyles, particularly through their work towards achieving a Healthy Schools Award and the high profile that is given to a range of sporting activities such as cross-country running. These are influencing pupils to keep fit and eat healthily. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe as they have many opportunities to learn about how to make sensible lifestyle choices through personal, social and health education programmes.

Cultural development is a particular strength as regular visits from authors and artists and sessions at theatre and drama workshops are all regular features of pupils' learning. In addition, the close link that is being forged with a school in Zambia is giving pupils a good opportunity to compare their learning experiences with those from a very contrasting country.

Pupils make a good contribution to the local community through such activities as gymnastic displays, plays, fetes and concerts.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good and in some instances very good, particularly in Key Stage 2. Lessons are well planned and take good account of the wide age range in each class. Because teachers are skilful at motivating pupils with activities well matched to their needs and ensure a brisk pace to lessons, pupils make good progress. A high

level of challenge and sensitive support are the significant features of very good teaching. Teaching assistants make a particularly valuable contribution to lessons. Minor weaknesses include the underuse of interactive whiteboards to support the teaching and the occasional lack of pace in part of the lessons.

Pupils' work is regularly marked with positive comments. Although some marking encourages a dialogue with pupils about their learning and provides clear and achievable targets, this is not always the case and the clarity of written guidance on how work can be improved varies as a consequence. The school collects extensive assessment data and uses this to establish accurate individual learning goals. However, procedures for setting short-term targets to achieve these goals are not fully implemented. There are good arrangements for assessing and setting targets for pupils who find learning difficult. Teachers are able to focus closely on the needs of these pupils so that they can make very good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It is well planned to cope with the wide age range in each class. Close links with neighbouring schools and recent improvements in resources for information and communication technology are extending what the school itself can offer. The school is seeking to overcome the limitations to physical education imposed by a lack of adequate indoor space.

There is an excellent range of additional activities. Extra-curricular clubs place a strong emphasis on sport and a range of residential trips, and workshops and visits by specialists such as authors and artists, all help to ensure that the curriculum is varied and interesting.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is good, with a suitable emphasis being placed on learning through play. The school is aware of the need to develop aspects of physical development, for example by improving equipment in the outside play area. Strong links with the Key Stage 1 curriculum help to ensure the continuity of pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The care, guidance and support given to pupils is outstanding. This reflects the positive ethos of the school and the strong sense of community, and is illustrated by the outstanding commitment of staff and the very responsible attitudes of pupils throughout the school.

There are very effective and well established procedures in place for health and safety, child protection and risk assessment. The adults know all the pupils very well and provide sensitive guidance and support as they progress through the school. In this, the school receives good assistance from external specialists such as the educational psychologist. Pupils are regularly asked for their views on how things can be improved and these views are listened and responded to well.

The care provided during breaks and at lunchtimes is a particular strength. Sanctions and rewards are clear and the school places great emphasis on boosting the confidence and self-esteem of pupils. A very good range of activities is provided and staff ensure that pupils play happily together. A system has been developed where older pupils are trained to support younger ones who may be lonely. They take their responsibilities very seriously and make a positive contribution to the calm and happy atmosphere of the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good at all levels. Staff and governors work in close cooperation to evaluate the school's performance, address weaknesses and develop strengths. This process has ensured that standards improve and that good support is given to staff and pupils. The strength of leadership and management is well illustrated by the way in which standards were maintained during the recent long-term absence, through illness, of the headteacher.

Overall, good account is taken of the views of other stakeholders such as the local community. Parents are kept well informed about the progress of their children and whole-school developments but, although they are pleased with the quality of education provided by the school, a significant number indicated during the inspection that they felt the school does not take sufficient account of their views.

Improvement planning identifies appropriate priorities and suitable strategies to address weaknesses. However, the improvement plan does not indicate sufficiently clearly how the school measures its success in achieving such improvements.

The headteacher provides good leadership. She monitors the work of the school closely, consults widely with staff and maintains an appropriate balance between supporting staff and having high expectations of their performance.

All staff are well trained and teachers' training needs are clearly linked to performance management systems. Support staff are starting to benefit from a performance management system but this is not yet fully established. Curriculum managers have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and take suitable steps to improve them. The governors are well managed and a structured programme of visits helps to keep them well informed about the work of the school. They provide an appropriate balance of challenge and support and are making a positive contribution to the development of the school.

The school functions well and, because its leadership and management have shown a clear and successful understanding of how and where it needs to develop, its capacity for further improvement is good.

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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 |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|

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 | NA |
| How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being? | 2 | NA |
| The quality and standards in foundation stage | 2 | NA |
| The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation | 2 | NA |
| The capacity to make any necessary improvements | Yes | NA |
| Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection | Yes | NA |

Achievement and standards

| | | |
|--|---|----|
| How well do learners achieve? | 2 | NA |
| The standards ¹ reached by learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress | 1 | NA |

Personal development and well-being

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners? | 2 | NA |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 2 | NA |
| The behaviour of learners | 1 | NA |
| The attendance of learners | 2 | NA |
| How well learners enjoy their education | 1 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community | 2 | NA |
| How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being | 2 | NA |

The quality of provision

| | | |
|---|---|----|
| How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs? | 2 | NA |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 | NA |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported? | 1 | 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? | 2 | NA |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 2 | NA |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review | 2 | NA |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 | NA |
| How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money | 2 | NA |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 2 | 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 | Yes |
| 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 | Yes |
| 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 | Yes |
| 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

Dear Pupils

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I visited your school. I very much enjoyed talking to you about what you are learning and the clubs that you take part in. You told me that you love coming to school, which is great!

I was very impressed with how hard you work and how well you behave in lessons and at break times. There is a lovely atmosphere in the school and the adults care for you all really well. Those of you who find learning tricky are particularly well supported.

I think that yours is a good school because the teachers know you well and make sure that the lessons are interesting. I think that your learning can be even better if you have clearer guidance from teachers on how you can improve your work, and I have asked Mrs Whitman and the teachers to look at how they do this.

Most of you do better than expected by the time you leave the school, but writing and mathematics are areas which the school is rightly trying to improve, particularly with younger children.

Mrs Whitman, the staff and the governors are working very hard to make things even better, and I am sure that your school will continue to improve.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours faithfully

Chris Nye Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools