

# West Huntspill Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123696
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	314674
<b>Inspection date</b>	31 October 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Grainger

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	84
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Vacant Position
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ruth Newton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 October 2005
<b>School address</b>	New Road West Huntspill Highbridge TA9 3QE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01278 783842
<b>Fax number</b>	01278 794429

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school draws its pupils from the village of West Huntspill and the surrounding area. Some travel from further afield to attend the autistic resource base located at the school. Six pupils with statements of special educational needs are educated in the base. In the school as a whole, the percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. Pupils are from a mix of social and economic backgrounds. Almost all pupils are White British and all have English as their first language. On entry to the Reception Year, children's attainment is broadly at the level expected for their age.

The school was found to require special measures when it was inspected in October 2005. Inspectors have visited the school on five occasions since then. A locum headteacher is presently leading and managing the school and there is a newly established senior management team. The number of classes in the main school has been reduced this term from four to three.

## 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(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that this school no longer requires special measures. Nevertheless, in accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement and standards and in teaching and curriculum.

The overall effectiveness of the school is inadequate although it is improving at a satisfactory rate. Importantly, staff are now determined to do better and to secure improvement. The right action is being taken and the school is demonstrating that it has the necessary capacity to rectify its weaknesses. Parents and pupils are pleased with the changes that have already been made. As one parent said, reflecting the views of many, 'The school is moving in the right direction.'

Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Reception Year because the provision for them is adequate. Pupils' progress from the start of Year 1 to the end of Year 6 remains patchy and inadequate overall. It is reasonable in Year 1 and pupils now in Years 5 and 6 are moving on steadily so that they are getting closer to the standards expected at this age. Nevertheless, standards are still below average overall and progress remains too slow in Years 2 to 4. The school has not sufficiently adjusted its teaching to meet the needs of the wider age range of pupils now taught together in one class. Across much of the school, expectations of the more capable pupils, in particular, are inconsistent and not high enough. In contrast, pupils attending the autistic resource base do well in relation to their starting points and capabilities. They experience good teaching and a curriculum that is closely matched to their needs.

Staff have worked well with the local authority to analyse strengths and weaknesses in pupils' work. As a result, the school has rightly started to focus on improving opportunities for practical and investigative work in mathematics and science. This focus is beginning to accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics across the school and is increasing older pupils' knowledge and understanding in science. However, pupils still do not have enough opportunities for practical work in these subjects to make the gains needed. The school is responding to new national initiatives in the teaching of English, but it is not ensuring that all pupils have adequate opportunities to develop their competence in writing at length. Both teaching and the curriculum remain inadequate overall and cause pupils' underachievement.

A real strength, remarked on by many parents of both main school and base pupils, is the good pastoral care. A parent of one base pupil observed that, 'The fact that he is happy both to go to school and throughout the day proves to me that he feels safe.' Pupils feel secure at school, trust the adults and say that the school 'is like a big group of friends'. Pupils behave well and are caring towards each other. Their personal development and well-being are satisfactory and improving as, for example, their involvement in decision making through the school council increases. Academic guidance is not as good as pastoral care and is too inconsistent. This means that not all pupils know enough about how they can improve their performance.

The locum headteacher has done much to put the right systems in place to support improvement. Subject leadership is developing reasonably, although improvements are only recent. Whilst much successful action has been taken over the last few months to build the staff's capacity

for improvement, the school recognises that the involvement of subject leaders in checking provision and leading initiatives is a crucial area for further development.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 3**

Children in the Reception Year make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning and do well in aspects of their personal, social and emotional development. Teaching meets children's needs adequately and is most effective when the teacher gives direct support to groups. Whilst the curriculum covers all the recommended areas of learning, activities that children undertake without adult involvement do not always have a clear enough purpose. There is often a lack of structure to outdoor activities, particularly when the teacher is working indoors with Year 1 pupils who are taught in the same class. The school provides satisfactory leadership for the Foundation Stage. It has rightly identified the need to improve the use of the outdoor area and opportunities for children to initiate activities. Although there is further to go, some reasonable action has been taken.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve pupils' progress and ensure that pupils attain the standards of which they are capable.
- Ensure that teaching is closely matched to all pupils' needs and that expectations of all pupils are high enough.
- Improve opportunities for pupils to undertake practical and investigative activities in mathematics and science and to write at length.
- Make sure that all pupils are given clear guidance about how to improve their performance.
- Develop the involvement of subject leaders in checking on how well teaching and the curriculum meet pupils' needs and in ensuring improvements are made.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Pupils' achievement is inadequate and standards are below average. Children get off to a satisfactory start in the Reception Year. When they transfer to Year 1, almost all have attainment at the level expected and several are working at a higher level. This reasonable start is maintained in Year 1. In Years 2 to 4, pupils who underachieved significantly in the past are not making up lost ground in important areas such as writing and science and their standards are low. Their current rate of progress is still inadequate although it is just acceptable in mathematics. Progress is better than in the past in Years 5 and 6. In these particular years, gaps are being filled in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills and standards are starting to rise. Pupils in the base make good progress. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the main school progress at a similar rate to other pupils in their classes.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are sensitive to those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This care is demonstrated, for example, in the enthusiastic way in which funds were raised to purchase a special bicycle and toys for a pupil with particular needs. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the community and their good behaviour helps to make the school a safe place. They have started to contribute to improvements in the school, by having a representative on the school development planning

committee, for example. Pupils diligently carry out responsibilities and are responding well to increasing opportunities, such as those for older pupils to look after younger ones.

Pupils' understanding of how to stay fit and healthy is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy physical education lessons and are gaining an increased awareness of the importance of a healthy diet. They really enjoy being with their friends at school and also say that the school is getting better. However, their enjoyment is diminished when work does not really grab their interest or challenge them. The attendance rate has improved and is now broadly average. Despite pupils' many positive personal qualities, below average basic skills result in pupils being insufficiently well prepared for their future lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 4**

Teaching still fails to meet the needs of all pupils adequately and this is the main reason why pupils are underachieving. In particular, teaching takes too little account of the wide range of pupils' needs in Years 2 to 4 and the work provided is often much the same for all pupils. There is little evidence in these years of the teaching of writing or science, for example, being based on effective ongoing assessment of pupils' learning. Expectations of pupils are not high enough in these years. The picture is a little better, however, in mathematics. Teaching assistants are not always well enough deployed to support learning, particularly during whole class sessions. Their focus on what children should be learning is not always sharp enough in the Reception Year.

There are examples of satisfactory and even good teaching, but the more capable pupils are not consistently challenged. Teaching for pupils in Years 5 and 6 is much improved, with many good features evident. These older pupils are responding well to the challenges being set for them. Time is used well in lessons in this class and sessions at the end successfully reinforce learning and develop it further. In the base, teaching is closely matched to pupils' needs and adults work as a highly effective team to move learning on. However, signing is not used consistently and this results in some missed opportunities for communication with pupils. In all classes, positive relationships create the right climate for learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 4**

Weaknesses in the curriculum contribute to pupils' underachievement. In particular, there are too few opportunities for pupils to learn through practical and investigative activities in mathematics and science. The school has started to tackle this and improvements are evident in Years 5 and 6. Nevertheless, there is a lot further still to go. In Years 2 to 4, pupils' skills in writing at length are not developed adequately. This is because opportunities for extended writing are too infrequent.

Some positive developments are taking place to make the curriculum more exciting, such as starting topics with visits or 'hands on' activities. A visit to an organic farm, for example, enthused pupils in Years 2 to 4. The enrichment of the curriculum through visits, visitors and clubs is satisfactory. Pupils in the base have a good curriculum that is closely tailored to their needs.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

Pupils feel valued as individuals because pastoral care is good. The care for pupils in the base is exceptional and pupils enjoy excellent relationships with the adults. Many parents told inspectors how much they appreciate the high level of personal care provided. There is good attention to pupils' health and safety. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are secure.

Academic guidance is patchy. Although pupils have targets to help them to improve their performance, too many do not know what their targets are. However, pupils in Years 5 and 6 speak confidently about their targets. There is also some effective marking of the youngest children's work, with next steps in learning identified for Reception children. The way in which the school checks on and records pupils' progress is developing but the school recognises that its tracking systems are still at an early stage.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are now providing the school with an acceptable capacity for improvement. Of particular significance is the way in which the locum headteacher has put systems in place to help sustain improvement and support staff to take responsibility. The staff's increased recognition of their accountability for pupils' standards and progress underpins their determination to move the school on.

Senior leaders are now taking effective action to ensure that the data held on pupils' progress is accurate and understood by class teachers. They are also starting to drive improvements in mathematics, for example achieving a shared focus on improving particular aspects of teaching and the curriculum. Secure records have been established on pupils in the main school with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, moving this area on from a previously very poor position. Despite these improvements, the further involvement of subject leaders in checking the quality of provision and taking effective remedial action is a crucial area for development if improvement is to be sustained and accelerated. The base is well led and managed.

Governance continues to develop at a steady pace. Governors are playing an effective role in developing links with a neighbouring school aimed at supporting improvement. Their contribution to improvement through asking challenging questions is increasing satisfactorily. The local authority continues to provide a substantial amount of good quality support and this has been the most significant factor in turning this school around.

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## Annex A

## 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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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?	Yes

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

1 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of West Huntspill Community Primary School, Highbridge TA9 3QE

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. Members of the school council told us that you think that your school is getting better. We agree. It has still got some way to go and big improvements are still necessary. We found out that you are now more involved in making improvements and this is really important.

As on all the other visits I have made to your school, I saw that you behave well and are kind to each other. You are finding out more about how to keep fit and healthy. Your sensible behaviour helps to make the school a safe place. You told us that you feel safe at school. All the adults take good care of you.

You are getting off to a satisfactory start in Reception. Those of you now in Years 5 and 6 are catching up and learning lots of new things. The school needs to do more to help those of you in the middle of the school. We have asked the school to:

- improve your progress and make sure that you all do as well as you can
- match teaching closely to your needs and have high expectations of you
- give you more opportunities to learn through practical and investigative activities in mathematics and science and to do long pieces of writing
- tell you clearly what you need to do to improve your work
- get the teachers to check up more on how well you are doing and lead developments that will bring improvements for you.

Pupils in the base are doing well. The base gives you a good education and looks after you very well. Your parents are right to be delighted with it.

Please keep working hard and being considerate young people who look after each other well. Other inspectors will visit the school to see how it is getting on.

Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger Lead Inspector

1 November 2007

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Yours sincerely

Alison Grainger  
Lead Inspector