

Hinton St George Church of England School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123762
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340419
Inspection dates	5–6 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Derek Esp
Headteacher	David Carter
Date of previous school inspection	6 May 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed eight lessons and three teachers. They held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and scrutinised a range of documentation including the school's plans, policies, and records of progress made by the pupils and 71 completed questionnaires received from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress being made this year by pupils of all abilities in all three classes
- improvements in the use of assessment information and the ways pupils are helped to understand how they can improve their learning
- how well pupils are provided for in their mixed-age classes
- specific examples of outstanding personal development and care, guidance and support.

Information about the school

This school is considerably smaller than most first schools and has three mixed-age classes. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage share a class with some of the pupils in Year 1. All of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. These pupils' needs vary considerably and include physical disabilities, emotional needs and moderate learning difficulties, most of which relate to speech and language issues. The school has recently received Activemark and Artsmark awards, and gained Healthy Schools' status. The majority of teachers, including the headteacher, have been appointed since the last inspection. The school field is some 150 metres away and across the village street from the main site which contains all the buildings. The pre-school provision on site is not managed by the school's governing body and so is not reported upon here.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It is improving more and more rapidly. Several aspects are outstanding and there are relatively few aspects in need of improvement. The pupils' behaviour is outstanding throughout the school day. They relate to one another particularly well, and are exceptionally committed to helping out in and around their school community. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. All the pupils are exceptionally well known to the entire staff team and this strongly supports the outstanding care, guidance and support they all receive. Almost all parents and carers appreciate these qualities and those replying to the inspectors' questionnaire unanimously agreed that the school keeps them safe. He loves going to school and comes home buzzing and They have been fantastic with the care and support for my daughter were typical of the comments received by the inspectors.

Attainment is rising across the school. Pupils make good progress in all three classes and attain standards significantly above national expectations by the end of Year 4. They enjoy school and the many varied and interesting experiences and special activities, such as looking at the newly hatched chicks in the classroom or visiting the city of Bristol. Teaching is good and teachers continually assess pupils' learning. This helps ensure work is usually carefully matched to the wide range of pupils' needs in the mixed-age classes. However, in a few lessons teachers do not match activities closely enough to all groups, ensure a brisk enough pace to lessons or provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning. On these few occasions learning and progress are satisfactory rather than good. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start. However, the configuration within the somewhat cramped school buildings and site means the children do not have ready access to an outdoor area or a separate and designated indoor space in which they can freely choose to play. This restricts the range of experiences available to them and at times disturbs the older pupils with whom they share their classroom.

The headteacher and governors provide clear direction and leadership. The headteacher quickly established a team ethos within the staff, all of whom are clear about their roles and how they can contribute to school developments and improvements. He has excellent systems for tracking pupils' progress and leads systematic and rigorous checks on all aspects of the school's work. Very detailed reports are produced on the findings from these checks and are used to develop action plans for further improvement. The school has made substantial progress in addressing all the issues

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identified in the previous inspection report and has good capacity to improve further. However, some of the various monitoring reports and feedback notes lack precision in identifying exactly what needs to improve.□□□

□

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the quality of teaching in all three classes is more consistently at least good with outstanding elements by March 2011 by:
 - consistently making best use of assessments to match work carefully to the different groups within the class
 - ensuring pace and purpose are maintained in all parts of the lesson, including the reviews at the end
 - building in significant time and opportunities to enable pupils to reflect on their learning, and think clearly about their next steps and how they can improve.□
- Find ways of overcoming the constraints imposed by the building in order to extend the opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to move freely from one area to another, including, when possible, in and out of doors, thereby extending their independence and the range of experiences available to them.
- By July 2010 strengthen the effectiveness of reports from monitoring activities by ensuring they are presented succinctly with clear and precise points for improvement.□□

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy their time in school and achieve well. They arrive happily and punctually and attendance levels are above the national average. From starting points broadly as expected on entry to the school, attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage and Year 2 is rising and is now above average, having previously been average. By the end of Year 4 pupils' attainment is significantly above national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Evidence from lessons, pupils' books, work displayed in classrooms, discussions with pupils and the school's comprehensive assessment records is consistent. It shows progress by boys and girls of all abilities is good, having accelerated in the last two years, though more able and older pupils occasionally have patches of slower progress in a few lessons when work is not sufficiently challenging. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall: some, in reading for example, make stunning progress following carefully presented and intensive additional support, often with the help of the skilled teaching assistants, while a few others have periods of slower progress. Pupils currently in Years 2 and 4 are on track to continue the rising trend in attainment and to attain their challenging targets set at the beginning of the year. By the time they leave the school pupils have a good level of skills and qualities needed for the next stage of education and adult life.

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Pupils' behaviour is exemplary in class and around the school. Pupils relate to one another in an exceptionally thoughtful and mature way, share equipment and space in the playground, and listen attentively to each other's points of view. They are exceptionally well behaved in lessons, as seen when reading in contented silence in Year 2, or in Years 3 and 4 when working in pairs researching, with intrigue and horror, punishments administered in Victorian schools. They have a very strong sense of right and wrong and talk very perceptively about their ideas of prayer and the values and beliefs of some communities beyond rural Somerset. Many pupils very conscientiously take on roles to help out around the school, for example as class monitors, play leaders supervising the use of equipment, or serving as school councillors who conduct fact-finding missions, interview candidates for posts at the school and procure equipment for school. Members of the eco-club actively campaign in the local area, recently precipitating a visit from the town mayor. Many pupils contribute to the termly 'education Sunday' in the village and they enthusiastically become involved in charitable collections. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles, particularly in relation to a healthy diet and physical fitness. They feel safe in school and are confident that any problems they have will be dealt with fairly by staff.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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How effective is the provision?

The staff know all the pupils very well and work together exceptionally well to ensure high levels of care, guidance and support. This is evident from the very careful and detailed induction pupils receive on joining the school to the vigilant patrolling to ensure all pupils are met by their parents or carers at the end of each school day. There is excellent support for pupils seen to be vulnerable, with close working partnerships with parents and other agencies to meet their specific needs.

A key feature of the good teaching is the way teachers plan interesting and practical experiences that capture pupils' interests, seem relevant and make links between subjects, for example when working in small groups gathering a set of inflated balloons to demonstrate photosynthesis in a science lesson. These experiences are planned from a broad curriculum that includes many enriching experiences, for example visiting a Hindu temple or going on the weekly wellie-walk. This is reflected in the classrooms which are stimulating places for the pupils to be and where the displays celebrate their work and help them with their learning. The recent national Activemark award reflects how effectively the school promotes physical education despite the lack of a hall or large playground and the distance to the field. This, together with the Artsmark award, helps demonstrate strengths within the broad curriculum beyond the core subjects. In almost all instances, the school overcomes the constraints imposed by the congested site, except in relation to the range of opportunities for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The trained and experienced teaching assistants work effectively with small groups and individuals and are briefed very well by teachers, for example when preparing to work with a group of Year 3 pupils on aspects of subtraction in mathematics.

Effective and improved assessment procedures enable teachers to have an accurate knowledge of the wide range of abilities in the mixed-age classes and in most lessons these are used very well to ensure work is closely matched to pupils' different needs, promoting good learning. However, in a few lessons work is not sufficiently differentiated, and in these the pace of learning slows. The school has developed detailed procedures for marking pupils' work and providing them with feedback. However, it has recognised these are not being implemented consistently across the school and sufficient time is not always allocated for pupils to be involved in self-assessment or reflect on the teacher's written comments.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides clear and effective leadership with high expectations of himself, colleagues and pupils. This is a key factor in the school’s widespread recent improvements and in its continuing good capacity to improve further. The headteacher has established a comprehensive system for tracking pupils’ progress and this is used well to identify any variations. There is a strong team spirit and sense of collective responsibility with all staff feeling valued and involved. Subject leadership has improved significantly and subject leaders fulfil their roles well. The headteacher leads many formal and informal checks on the school’s performance, but ensures other staff and governors are fully involved in this process. These checks result in an accurate view of the school’s performance. However, notes and reports from the various monitoring checks and evaluations, for example the headteacher’s reports to governors, are often very long and do not always clearly identify the precise points in need of improvement or actions required.

Governance is good with exceptional levels of expertise within its leadership. Governors fulfil their legal responsibilities well and have a clear understanding of the school’s strengths and priorities for the future. They ensure all safeguarding policies and procedures are carried out vigilantly and are working resolutely towards further improvements. The school does not tolerate discrimination. Its inclusive approach and commitment to equal opportunities are reflected in the additional resources and staffing used to meet the needs of potentially vulnerable pupils and the way it carefully analyses the performance of individuals and groups in order to spot any apparent variations and respond accordingly. The parent of one such pupil wrote to the inspectors of her gratitude for the support received by her child. The school works effectively to promote community cohesion and this has contributed to the pupils’ strong understanding of national and global cultural diversity. The school has conducted an analysis of the needs of its immediate community, has a detailed action plan and many ongoing activities designed to promote pupils’ links and understanding of diverse communities locally, nationally and globally. The school council has made reciprocal visits with an urban school in Bristol, pupils are involved in the development of the village plan, and they are in regular contact with a school in Senegal.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Comprehensive and sensitive induction processes enable the children to settle in happily and quickly. This is helped by the close working relationships with the onsite pre-school. Children’s attainment on entry, although broadly as expected, is higher in social and emotional development and early number and counting skills. However, it is lower than expected in knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Children make good progress throughout the year. Attainment by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage has risen markedly in the last three years. Last year it was above average for the first time and children in school this year are set to repeat this, with many already attaining the learning goals expected by the end of the year. Teaching and assessment are good, with frequent opportunities for children to learn through play and first-hand experiences. A good example of this was seen when children were developing physical and mathematical skills through playing skittles, timing each other running around cones and throwing bean bags, before recording their results as a number sentence on a chart with the help of an adult. The teacher provides a good lead and works effectively as a team with the assistants. Planning ensure all areas of learning are included with a range of child-initiated and adult-directed activities. However, sharing just one room with Year 1 pupils imposes some restrictions on the opportunities and nature of independent choice. Furthermore, having no direct access to the outdoor area prevents any opportunities for free-flow in and out of doors. The new canopy is a good development as it means children can work and play outside under supervision more often and for a longer time. 2

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

The school sent questionnaires to each parent or carer rather than to each family and so the overall number of replies received is higher than might be expected in a school of this size. Parents and carers were unanimous in their agreement about keeping their children safe, and the inspectors concur. Each aspect of the school's work was supported by the large majority, with many parents and carers writing positive comments. The less positive replies were about preparation for the next stage of education and feeling consulted about their views. Inspectors do not share concerns about the next stage of education but note the perceptions of a few about not having their views considered; the school intends to review this. A few parents and carers expressed disappointment about the lack of hot meals for their children. The school is aware of this, having previously canvassed opinions and introduced them on a trial basis. Governors continue to explore ways this need could be met permanently.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Hinton-St-George Church of England First School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 71 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 71 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	72	18	25	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	59	83	12	17	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	39	55	25	35	6	8	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	59	22	31	5	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	48	68	17	24	4	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	43	61	21	30	4	6	2	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	55	28	39	3	4	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	41	58	21	30	5	7	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	55	27	38	3	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	40	56	29	41	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	45	30	42	7	10	2	3
The school is led and managed effectively	29	41	35	49	7	10	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	38	17	24	4	6	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



12 May 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Hinton St George Church of England First School, Crewkerne TA17 8SA

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing some of your work. Yours is a good school. We were particularly impressed by your brilliant behaviour, and by the way you are so thoughtful towards one another. You are very good at helping out around school and getting involved in various projects, for example working on □eco□ issues, carrying out investigations as school councillors or working as class or playground monitors. Many of you told us you feel safe in school. Your parents and carers all agree. This is because all the adults in school take exceptionally good care of you and are always there to help those of you who have problems from time to time. We are pleased you recognise how important it is to eat healthy food and do lots of exercise. That is why your school has received the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards. In lessons you listen very carefully, get on with your work sensibly and make good progress. Your teachers and teaching assistants are good at planning lots of interesting things for you to do in the classroom, and special events such as the □wellie walks□ and the trip to a Hindu temple. They make your classrooms interesting places to be and the displays celebrate your work and help you with your learning. Your headteacher is good at thinking of new ways to improve the school and the staff and governors work well with him as a team. We have asked them to work together on three things to make the school even better.

- Help teachers to use all the information they have about you when planning work so it is not too hard or too easy for you or your group, to keep lessons moving quickly, and to help you to be clear about what you have learnt and how to improve further.
- Find ways of giving the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage more opportunities to choose where and what they play with in and out of doors.
- Make sure leaders are very clear when writing reports about how well the school is working so they can all see exactly what needs to be done next.

You can help by continuing to work hard, telling your teachers if work is too easy or too difficult and by continuing to be helpful around the school.

Yours sincerely

Martin Kerly
Lead Inspector

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