

# Minehead First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	123656
<b>Local authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	380704
<b>Inspection dates</b>	1–2 March 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Christine Huard

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>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	271
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lynn Chuter
<b>Headteacher</b>	James Geen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6–7 May 2009
<b>School address</b>	Townsend Road Minehead TA24 5RG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01643 702938
<b>Fax number</b>	01643 704125
<b>Email address</b>	office@mineheadfirst.somerset.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	4–8
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	1–2 March 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	380704



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Christine Huard

Additional inspector

Simon Kingwell

Additional inspector

Geoff Mason

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 15 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 10 teachers. They also observed sessions on the teaching of phonics (pupils learning letter patterns and the sounds they represent) and listened to pupils reading. Observations totalled nine hours. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, senior leaders, teachers and members of the governing body. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), as well as documents provided by the school, in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's systems to track the progress of pupils, records of monitoring of the quality of teaching, the school's improvement plans and minutes from meetings. Inspectors analysed the 75 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, as well as those returned by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

Minehead First is a large school. There are 10 classes in the school and children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two discrete Reception classes. The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is above average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is also above average. Almost all the pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average.

The headteacher was appointed in an acting capacity in January 2010 and the post was made permanent in May 2011.

The school has a breakfast club and after-school club. A preschool also operates within the school site. All of these are run privately and therefore are not part of this inspection.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- Minehead First is a good school and has made significant improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching and the progress pupils are making. It is not yet outstanding because attainment in writing is slightly lower than reading and mathematics. Teaching, although securely good across the whole school, is not yet outstanding.
- Pupils' achievement is good. From very low starting points, pupils' attainment at the end of Year 4 in 2011 was broadly in line with age-related expectations in reading and mathematics and slightly below in writing. Currently, pupils in Year 4 are attaining at above the levels expected in reading and mathematics and broadly in line with them in writing. The introduction of a programme to raise standards in writing has been particularly successful. However, basic skills of grammar, spelling and punctuation still require some improvement.
- Consistently good teaching is the reason for pupils' accelerated progress over the last 18 months. Teaching is not yet outstanding because very occasionally the pace slows a little during teachers' introductions to lessons. Although teachers use a good, wide range of strategies to motivate and interest pupils, occasionally, some of these lack pizzazz and imagination.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They behave well and are keen to learn. They sustain concentration and approach their tasks with enthusiasm and zeal. This thirst for learning has enabled pupils to move forward successfully in their learning.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very strong in managing the school's and teacher performance. Rigorous monitoring and evaluation of how well the school was doing enabled leaders and staff to identify where there were weaknesses in teaching and learning. Strategies to address these and raise attainment were put in place quickly as well as a successful programme of training which enabled staff to move pupils on more effectively. There is now an identified need to work more closely with parents and carers to enable them to better support their children's learning.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of writing across the school by focusing on improving basic skills such as spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Raise the quality of teaching to outstanding by:
  - using a wider range of imaginative strategies to inspire and motivate pupils
  - ensuring pace remains brisk throughout all teachers' introductions to lessons.
- Work more closely with parents and carers to provide a broad and accessible range of strategies to enable them to better support their children's learning, especially in literacy and numeracy.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children enter Reception Year with attainment which is low in comparison to children of a similar age. They make good progress in all the areas of learning. Children achieve well because teaching is consistently good. The good focus on children learning the sounds that letters, and combinations of letters, make (phonics), means children build up their reading skills well and gain a real enthusiasm for stories and books. While children leave the Reception with skills that are still below those expected, the percentage of those who achieve age-related expectations is increasing year on year.

In Years 1 and 2, the teaching of phonics continues to be of high priority and consequently attainment in reading is broadly average in Year 2. Pupils have acquired good strategies to tackle unfamiliar words and rapidly gain confidence when reading. This pattern continues throughout the school so that by the time pupils leave school in Year 4 they are reading at a higher level than expected for their age. Pupils' attainment in writing at the end of Year 2 remains a little below average and improving, and by Year 4, it is line with that expected and pupils achieve well. A programme designed to enthuse pupils in writing is proving to be highly successful, although teachers sometimes miss opportunities to use strategies such as drama and role play to interest pupils further. In lessons, it was evident that tasks which are related to real-life experiences excite the pupils most and enable them to learn more effectively. For example, pupils in Year 4 responded extremely well to a task to write a number rhyme for their young 'buddies' in the Reception classes. They used appropriate vocabulary and imaginative and catchy rhymes. A good focus on

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handwriting and presentation meant that pupils took a pride in their work. Similarly, basic skills such as spelling, grammar and punctuation are beginning to improve across the school, but are not yet as well developed as they should be for the age of the pupils. This is the main reason why attainment in writing is not as high as in mathematics and reading. Across the school, achievement in mathematics has improved significantly. Pupils are now attaining at least at the appropriate levels for their ages and pupils in Year 4 are on track to reach higher than expected standards. This progress has been possible because of teachers' good subject knowledge and an adapted curriculum that ensures that pupils have regular opportunities to use and apply the knowledge and skills they are gaining.

The school has focused successfully on narrowing the gap in progress between different groups of pupils. It has been particularly successful in narrowing the gender gap and boys now make similar progress to girls. All pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. They receive particularly good support from effective learning support assistants. Almost all the parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire rightly thought that their children make good progress.

### Quality of teaching

Almost all parents and carers think that the teaching is good in the school. Inspection evidence endorses this. Teaching in the Reception classes is lively and exciting, and ensures that children are provided with a range of activities to promote their learning. There is a good emphasis on role-play activities although this is not continued through the school. These activities lead to children enthusiastically embracing literacy and numeracy activities. For example, role play based on the story of *'Bruce and the Bucket of Dinosaurs'* led to children becoming very involved in a range of different activities designed to improve their speaking and listening skills, including a 'cinemasaurus' where they performed their own plays using stick puppets they had made.

Teachers throughout the school work hard to ensure that learning is relevant and fun. As a result of this approach, one pupil said, 'I am hypnotised by mathematics lessons, I love them.' Nevertheless, in order to make teaching outstanding, there is scope for teachers to use more imaginative learning strategies and to ensure that teaching has a brisk pace in all lessons. Teaching is at its most effective when there is a brisk, focused teacher input and introduction, followed by punctuated short burst tasks across the lesson time. This enables teachers to keep moving forward those pupils who are ready and to provide further reinforcement for those who need it. This practice is not yet embedded in all lessons.

The planned curriculum has a very positive impact on pupils' progress, particularly the many opportunities offered across different subjects for pupils to enhance their basic skills in literacy and numeracy. Teachers adapt the curriculum to ensure the

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abilities of pupils are closely met. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils are encouraged to be thoughtful and reflective. They are expected to work well collaboratively and respect the right of others to learn by behaving and listening well themselves.

The teaching of phonics in Key Stage 1 is successfully enabling pupils to read more confidently independently. The sessions are focused on individual needs and learning support assistants play a valuable role in moving forward the learning of pupils. Guided reading lessons are effective in teaching reading in Years 3 and 4, enabling pupils to develop a great enjoyment of books as well as acquiring higher order reading skills, such as drawing inferences.

The school's marking policy is applied consistently. Teacher comments are constructive and developmental, and pupils respond well to them, establishing a good dialogue about their learning. Marking frequently refers to pupils' individual targets. Pupils know and understand their targets and respond positively to the challenge they provide.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Almost all parents and carers said that they thought the standard of behaviour in the school was good. This was very evident during the inspection and the good behaviour observed in lessons was said by the pupils to be typical. The playgrounds are happy and harmonious places. Pupils have a very good understanding of what bullying entails and of different kinds of bullying such as physical, emotional and cyberbullying. They describe accurately the differences between one-off incidents and prolonged ' nastiness '. They said they had no knowledge of there ever being any real bullying but are very confident that if it did occur it would be dealt with appropriately. The school's own records show that incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare. The school's behaviour policy is applied consistently and is highly effective in preventing any disruption to pupils' learning.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards school. There are strong relationships between the pupils and adults in the school, and a mutual respect clearly exists between them. Pupils enjoy their learning and this is reflected in their attendance, which is above average, and punctuality, which is good. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive that their children are safe in school. Pupils say they feel very safe in school and are taught how to keep themselves safe. Older pupils are proud to 'buddy' the youngest children and help them to gain confidence and feel secure in school. The recent e-safety week has ensured that pupils have a good awareness of the dangers of cyberbullying and social network sites on the internet.

### **Leadership and management**

The leadership of the headteacher is strong. Since being appointed, he has relentlessly pursued opportunities to improve provision and raise achievement. Staff

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have responded with enthusiasm. They are motivated and enthusiastic, and share the ambitious but realistic vision for sustained improvement. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. The many improvements made since the last inspection, particularly in teaching, have led to pupils' higher attainment by the end of Year 4, and an improvement in pupils' attendance. The school demonstrates a secure capacity for further improvement.

Middle leaders play an influential role in school improvement. They take a full part in the effective monitoring of the work of the school. The monitoring programme is robust and provides valuable feedback for all staff on what is going well and where further development is needed. The governing body is very knowledgeable and challenges the school's performance very well. Governors and school leaders ensure that children are safe and secure and all statutory requirements regarding safeguarding and child protection are fully met.

The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced, and meets pupils' individual needs and motivates them to learn. It successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are taught to consider the needs of others and gain a good understanding of other cultures through a range of visits and visitors. School leaders and staff ensure that there is no discrimination and carefully track the progress of pupils to ensure all have equal opportunities to succeed and make good progress. The school works well with its parents and carers. Nearly all parents and carers feel the school helps them support their children's learning. However, the school itself rightly feels it could provide workshops to enable parents and carers to help their children more with numeracy and literacy. The exceptionally high return of questionnaires by parents and carers demonstrates their degree of interest in, and support for, the school and their children's learning.



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



5 March 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Minehead First School, Minehead TA24 5RG**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. You were really polite and friendly and helped us to learn a lot about what you do and what you enjoy. Your school gives you a good education and is rapidly improving.

#### **What we found about your school**

- You achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.
- You enjoy coming to school and behave well.
- Your teachers usually plan interesting lessons and mark your work very well so that you know what you have to do to improve.
- Your headteacher and teachers are working very hard to help you do better.

#### **What we have asked your school to do now**

- We have challenged your teachers to make lessons even more exciting and to make sure that they always keep the lessons moving along briskly.
- We think you would do even better in writing if your spelling, punctuation and grammar were improved. We think you would also do better if you sometimes had a chance to use drama and role play to act things out before writing about them.
- We would like the school to help your parents and carers to help you more, by providing them with more information about how it teaches you literacy and numeracy.

We are sure that you will do all you can to help all adults who work with you to make your school even better.

Yours sincerely

Christine Huard  
Lead Inspector

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