

Horrington Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123647
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	380701
Inspection dates	5–6 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Jill Bavin

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	131
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Pardey
Headteacher	Helen Gregory
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2007
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who observed ten lessons taught by five teachers. The inspection team also met with pupils, staff and members of the governing body and analysed work in pupils' books. They observed the school's work and looked at a variety of documentation, including policies and documentation related to safeguarding, data about pupils' progress, monitoring and evaluation records, and school development plans. Questionnaire responses from staff, pupils, and 38 parents and carers were analysed. The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The sustainability of above-average attainment and good progress for all pupils throughout the school.
- Curriculum development since the previous inspection, especially related to writing.
- The extent to which effective monitoring has developed since the previous inspection and now informs planning for school development.

Information about the school

This is a smaller-than-average primary school where all pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are very few pupils who are new to speaking English as an additional language. Although the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals has increased over recent years, it remains below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than is typical nationally.

Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll has increased, which resulted in the school moving from four to five classes in September 2010. There have also been staff changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Since September 2011 there has been a shared leadership arrangement. The headteacher is in school Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday each week, and for the remainder of the week a senior teacher with headship responsibilities is in charge of the school.

The school holds Dyslexia Friendly status.

There is private pre-school provision on site. It is not managed by the governing body and did not form 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

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

'Wonderful', 'excellent', 'dynamic' and 'brilliant' are how several parents and carers describe this outstanding school. One commented that pupils' individuality is celebrated. A key feature of the outstanding teaching is the extent to which teachers plan to meet individual needs and so promote very high rates of progress for all groups of pupils, whatever their starting points. Pupils reach high levels of attainment in English and mathematics and their achievement is exceptional. They enjoy school immensely; their behaviour is exemplary and their attendance rates are above average.

The school's exceptionally strong leadership and outstanding capacity for further development are indicated in its improvement from good to outstanding in most areas of its work and sustained strengths in others, since the previous inspection. Most significantly, systems for checking how well each pupil is achieving have improved dramatically. They are far more detailed, easy to use and rigorously analysed than previously. As a result, teachers routinely use this information to plan their lessons. This is a major factor in pupils' academic outcomes having improved from good to outstanding. These high levels of achievement are set to continue. Teaching is now outstanding in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The analysis of pupils' progress also influences curriculum planning for individual pupils and groups of pupils. The curriculum has recently been reviewed to ensure continued progress for pupils while accommodating the extra class brought about by the increase in pupil numbers. It now serves all pupils extremely effectively. This is exemplified in the school's increased opportunities for pupils of all ages to write extensively and creatively and also to make valuable use of computer technology to enhance their learning in a variety of subjects. Opportunities for pupils to make a contribution to the local and wider community have increased since the previous inspection and are now outstanding. That said, the school has recognised that international links have diminished and plans are in place to address this. Pupils enjoy sports and music activities with pupils from backgrounds that differ from their own. The school has plans in place to extend these experiences. Inspection evidence confirms the school's evaluation that, until plans are fully implemented, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development remains good rather than outstanding.

In spite of staff changes, previous strengths in the Early Years Foundation Stage have been sustained, although opportunities to give children more chances to select and explore highly stimulating resources with discreet and sensitive support are sometimes missed. The governing body supports the school effectively and

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contributes to the good arrangements for keeping pupils safe and the school's good level of care, support and guidance. Parents and carers commend the school for its work to help pupils settle in school, which are extremely thorough. There are outstanding features in the care taken to support those pupils who face the most challenging circumstances, which are also appreciated by parents. This is a highly cohesive school, with a clear and realistic understanding of its strengths and priorities for development. Staff share high ambitions for themselves and their pupils. These are communicated to pupils who, as a result, flourish in a culture of high expectations. They embrace challenge enthusiastically and seek to challenge themselves.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enrich learning for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - providing them with more opportunities to make choices and pursue their interests
 - ensuring that resources for independent work are always highly stimulating
 - allocating an adult to circulate and provide sensitive support when children are working at activities of their own choice.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Attainment in tests at the end of Year 6 have been significantly higher than average for English and mathematics over recent years. In spite of small numbers where the characteristics of different year groups could have a significant impact on results in national tests, this has not happened. Lessons seen during the inspection confirm that high levels of achievement are set to continue and that pupils' engagement with their tasks is usually exemplary. Older pupils made exceptional progress over a half-hour period, while using 'netbooks' to access their class-based virtual learning environment. They stretched their calculation skills as a precursor to calculating the perimeters of increasingly complex shapes and the most confident majority moved from using numbers to algebraic formulae. Their attitude to this high level of challenge was excellent. Similar strengths were evident in other classes. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 achieved impressively while using computer technology to refine their play-writing skills. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 made exceptional gains over a short period of time in selecting vocabulary, editing their work and developing their understanding of the features of play scripts, specifically pantomimes as part of their 'drama' theme. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieved outstandingly well while creating increasingly complex sentences. Focused, individual support ensures that all groups make similarly outstanding progress, including the very few pupils who speak English as an additional language, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals.

The resilience which pupils develop in relation to their academic work is also evident in their thoughtful determination to make a positive contribution to the school and

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wider community. For example, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities seek to ‘repay’ support that has benefited them, by setting and meeting huge personal challenges in order to raise money for specific charities. Pupils have a strong sense of commitment towards wildlife and environmental issues, which they translate into organising action on their own initiative, such as litter picking and providing bird boxes in local woodland. They willingly embrace opportunities to take responsibility for entrepreneurial ideas and market research for local businesses. The most recent of these resulted in a new bun being produced and sold at a local delicatessen. They have a good understanding of how to make safe and healthy choices, although they tend to apply these to themselves rather than seeking to influence others. They are welcoming of the diversity that is represented in their school and interested in the world beyond. Given the strengths in both their academic and personal development, pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Ambitious expectations from staff apply to all pupils regardless of their level of need. Highly positive relationships between adults and pupils and excellent use of assessment combine to underpin seamless behaviour management and a relentless pace to lessons, while maintaining pupils’ enjoyment. ‘Every hand should be up’, ‘now push yourselves hard’ and ‘make sure you challenge yourselves’, are typical examples of how teachers express their high expectations. Teachers’ subject knowledge is strong and this is particularly noticeable in their promotion of key

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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literacy, numeracy and technology skills. It enables them to introduce new ideas, address misconceptions and maintain challenging expectations with a high level of consistency. Teaching assistants make a very valuable contribution to pupils’ learning. They are discreet when they offer support and resist being over-directive, so they support pupils’ gains in independent learning very effectively. A particular strength in teaching throughout the school is the dialogue between teachers and pupils, which is identified in planning and features routinely in lessons. This consistently identifies pupils’ achievements and their next steps in learning, and so empowers them with a precise and regularly updated understanding of where they stand. This increases pupils’ confidence on a daily basis.

Interesting links between subjects enrich pupils’ learning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 applied and extended computer and literacy skills while deepening their religious knowledge and understanding. Their topic about ‘animals’ led smoothly to research about donkeys and the importance of these animals to both the Christmas and Easter stories. The symbolism of the mark of a cross on the donkey’s back was alluded to and so encouraged those pupils with the capacity to begin to appreciate symbolism to do so. Highly effective partnerships with specialists external to the school help to enrich the curriculum. For example, the school enlists the support of a Mandarin speaker to provide a Mandarin language club. Most pupils take advantage of the extensive variety of sports activities supported by the school’s partnerships. Staff have expertise in supporting pupils with specific learning difficulties, reflecting the school’s Dyslexia Friendly status. They have access to a raft of intervention strategies, programmes and resources to use and modify to meet individual needs. Their flexible and rapid response helps to prevent difficulties from becoming entrenched. This contributes to the relatively small proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and the outstanding progress made by those with identified needs.

Strong links with a range of external professionals are used to benefit the learning and welfare of each pupil as needs arise. Arrangements for easing the transfer to high school are extremely well planned for those pupils facing the most challenging circumstances. Pastoral care is outstanding. ‘A nurturing environment’ and ‘our young sons have flourished’ are comments which reflect the views of several parents and carers. That said, inspection evidence confirms the school’s evaluation that care and guidance are good and not outstanding because of the on-going work in addressing some safeguarding issues.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils’ needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1

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The effectiveness of care, guidance and support

2

How effective are leadership and management?

The governing body, senior staff and colleagues share a strong commitment to continued school improvement, to tackling discrimination and to the promotion of equality of opportunity. This shared determination contributes to the similarly impressive achievement for boys and girls of all abilities, whatever their backgrounds. It has also contributed to the significant closing of previous gaps in achievement between pupils of different age groups, since the previous inspection. The governing body take their responsibilities very seriously and monitor assiduously the impact of key decisions, such as the new leadership and management arrangements. They make good use of the improved procedures for tracking how well each pupil is achieving to hold the school to account, although their visits into school are not as focused and organised as they could be.

With effective support from the governing body the school adopts recommended good practice for safeguarding pupils. Procedures are thorough and effective, although the school does not always fully record the action it has taken. There are particular strengths in the school’s knowledge and understanding of how to support those pupils who face the most challenging circumstances. Excellent relationships between pupils and staff help to keep pupils safe because they are confident that they have an adult to turn to with any concerns. The governing body contributes to the school’s good understanding of its local community. They support the school in evaluating what is working well and what needs to be done next. For example, they recognise the benefit of existing arrangements for pupils to link with a school in Finland and to work with pupils from different backgrounds in the wider community. Additionally, they endorse the establishment of a working group to re-invigorate pupils’ e-mail links with schools on other continents and to forge more consistent contact with schools in the United Kingdom.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and management have successfully sustained previous strengths in the provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage. New members of staff have received a good level of support. Children join the school with a wide range of abilities and most are at the level expected for their age across all areas of learning. They make good progress overall, which is most evident in early literacy and numeracy skills. As a result, they join Year 1 with some emerging strengths in these areas. The staff team have a good level of expectation and plan carefully to meet children’s individual needs. They have become more organised and skilled in making short-term assessments of children’s achievements, which are then used in identifying their ‘next steps’. They are contributing to the school’s drive to extend pupils’ writing opportunities and during the inspection it was evident that children enjoyed mark-making, play writing and using their phonic knowledge to begin to formulate words.

Children feel secure and are ready to learn because the staff team set a good example to children of how to behave and communicate, and behaviour is managed sensitively. On occasions the pace of child-initiated learning is not as rapid as it could be because there is no adult circulating to offer specific support. Resources are not always highly stimulating and sometimes children stay too long listening on the carpet as whole group. Learning is most effective when exciting resources are available after inputs by the adults. During the inspection, after well-timed teacher-led input about days of the week, boys and girls opted to write using this vocabulary. They made good gains in their letter formation and in using their knowledge of letters and sounds. A group of pupils working outside with a teaching assistant made good progress in applying similar knowledge to recognise vocabulary about days of the week while playing a board game. This also reinforced their mathematical and early geographical understanding because of the skilled adult use of vocabulary related to position.

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

Most parents and carers who returned questionnaires are very appreciative of the work of the school. The most common area of concern expressed by a few parents and carers related to the safety of pupils in the parents' and visitors' car park. Inspection evidence indicated that the governing body and school staff are very aware of the problems that arise in the car park. They are continuing to work with appropriate authorities, as well as with parents and carers, seeking to overcome the difficulties and the understandable concerns. A very few individual concerns mostly related to issues of communication. Inspection evidence found channels of communication for parents and carers to be good. There was unanimous agreement that the school is well led, teaching is good and pupils are well prepared for the future. These are outstanding aspects of the school's work.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Horrington Primary 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 38 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 131 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	89	4	11	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	58	14	37	2	5	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	17	45	19	50	2	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	55	15	39	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	25	66	12	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	18	47	18	47	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	24	63	14	37	0	0	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)	21	55	12	32	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	23	61	13	34	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	16	42	20	53	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	26	22	58	2	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	22	58	15	39	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	30	79	6	16	1	3	0	0

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 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



7 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Horrington Primary School, Wells, BA5 3EB

We thoroughly enjoyed meeting you just before Christmas. A special thank you goes to those of you who met with me in the staffroom to share your ideas about the school and to those of you who spoke to me about your work when I visited your lessons. We know that most of you enjoy school enormously and your parents and carers are very happy that you attend Horrington. We can understand this because you go to an outstanding school. There are too many very good things to mention every one, but here are some.

- You attend school more regularly than most pupils of your age, make fantastic progress in English and mathematics, and use computers very confidently.
- Your teachers are brilliant at planning to meet everyone's needs; they help you to aim high and you enjoy being challenged.
- We are very impressed by your extremely good behaviour. You are enthusiastic about learning and work really hard.
- You have plenty of interesting topics such as 'animals' and themes such as 'drama' that make really interesting links between subjects.
- All the adults in school and the governors want the best for you and they work very hard together to keep making the school even better.

We think the most important things for the school to do next are:

- to make sure that children in Reception have more chances to choose activities that are always really interesting and for there to be an adult to move around and see what everyone is doing when they are working at something they have chosen.

You can help by continuing to behave and attend well. We hope you always enjoy learning so much.

Yours sincerely

Jill Bavin
Lead inspector

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