

Inspection of West Huntspill Community Primary School

New Road, West Huntspill, Highbridge, Somerset, TA9 3QE

Inspection dates: 15–16 January 2020

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Early years provision

Inadequate

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like school and know staff care and want the best for them. Pupils feel safe and valued but, from an early age, they quickly fall behind in their learning. Gaps in pupils' knowledge increase as they get older, which makes it difficult for them to access new learning. When this occurs, teachers struggle to adapt the curriculum for the wide-ranging needs of pupils within the classroom. Staff have low expectations of pupils. As a result, pupils lose interest, their presentation in books suffers and low-level disruptions occurs.

For a few years, the rate of pupils' absence from school has been too high, with too many pupils regularly missing school. Leaders introduced 'William the Bear' to help improve pupils' attendance, rewarding the class with the strongest attendance from the previous week. These recent actions have brought about improvements but there is still much more to do.

Pupils behave well around the school. They follow the school's ethos, and staff reward pupils for their endeavours during weekly achievement assemblies. Parents come to these assemblies to celebrate with their children. This a positive feature of the school.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Senior leaders have been in place for little over a year. In this time, they have made changes to safeguarding processes in school and attempted to tackle pupils' poor attendance. This has brought about some improvement. Leaders' actions to improve the quality of education have not been swift enough. They are not clear why pupils underachieve as they do. Curriculum leadership is not bringing about improvements and the governing body is inexperienced. Governors are accessing training to help them fulfil their responsibilities but do not yet have an in-depth evaluation of the school.

School leaders have not tackled weaknesses in pupils' early reading. Staff lack expertise to teach phonics effectively and have low expectations. Children who struggle to read and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not supported well enough. Senior leaders do not give enough attention to pupils who most need it. Pupils read slowly and struggle to read basic words. Across the school, pupils do not have the reading skills they need for different subjects. This was seen when teachers set work in mathematics that pupils could not read.

The school's writing curriculum is poor. Teachers do not have clear guidance about what to teach and when. Some teachers expect pupils to write fiction or non-fiction texts with little or no knowledge of their key features. Children in the Reception class have few opportunities to practise their writing. They show a poor grasp of phonics and their letter formation is under-developed. As pupils get older, gaps continue to grow. By the time pupils start key stage 2, almost half of them need to

catch up urgently. Due to weaknesses in the school's curriculum and teachers' knowledge, they do not do so.

Teachers follow a consistent mathematics approach across the school. However, they do not check on pupils' progress well enough. Teachers move on to new learning when some pupils are not ready. Pupils struggle with basic number knowledge. They do not have the secure foundations they need to attempt trickier problems.

Curriculum plans for foundation subjects are not sufficiently detailed. Teachers do not link subjects together to form a coherent unit of work that builds on pupils' prior learning. Lessons are poorly sequenced. Teachers adapt curriculum plans throughout the year, but this approach lacks strategy. Pupils, therefore, do not develop the knowledge they need across subjects.

Pupils with SEND do not get the support they need. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) knows that some staff lack the knowledge they need to support pupils. Pupils' targets are often vague, which makes it difficult to pinpoint what support pupils need or the progress they have made. At times, support for pupils does not occur at all and pupils' needs remain unmet.

Pupils know how to live healthy lives and have an understanding about how to keep safe, particularly when using the internet. Pupils also understand right from wrong. They demonstrate an appreciation of a different culture through their links with another school in Africa. Pupils know all this, despite the lack of a coherent plan for the personal, social and health education curriculum.

Children in the Reception class rely too much on adults. Too often, they sit and wait for adults' help. In writing and early reading, children get off to a slow start, which makes them even more dependent on adults. Leaders have identified that children's speech and language are often poor when they start the Reception Year, but their actions to improve these have lacked urgency and impact.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure pupils are safe. Staff are vigilant when recording concerns about pupils' welfare. They told inspectors they pass on concerns they have about pupils' welfare to leaders, even if concerns appear to be minor. They are confident leaders will act in pupils' best interests but would not hesitate to escalate a concern to the local authority if they had to. Leaders have a clear system for recording concerns. This helps them track concerns over time and spot patterns. Leaders make sure recruitment procedures are robust. They only appoint adults suitable to work with children. Parents who responded to Ofsted Parent View are unanimously confident that their children are safe in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Senior leaders are not demonstrating the capacity to bring about improvement. They do not have a clear understanding of why pupils underachieve as they do. Senior leaders must use careful, precise monitoring to ensure the school's improvement priorities are having the desired impact.
- Governors are new to role and in the early stages of training. They are not able to hold leaders to account with sufficient rigour. Governors should seek to build their expertise and understanding of the school's effectiveness.
- The teaching of phonics and early reading is poor. Pupils fall behind in the phonics programme from an early age and do not catch up. Leaders must urgently prioritise pupils' acquisition of phonic knowledge and early reading, as these are distinct barriers to pupils' learning. They must make sure staff have the training they need to help all pupils learn to read and provide rapid, effective support for pupils who need to catch up.
- Pupils' absence, particularly for those who regularly miss school, remains too high. Leaders must continue to bring absence rates into line with national averages, so that pupils do not miss key learning.
- Curriculum leadership is not effective. Subject curriculum plans either lack detail or are not in place at all. Curriculum leaders need training, so they can introduce an effective curriculum in their subject and check that teachers are implementing it well.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is weak. This makes it difficult for them to adapt what they are teaching to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly pupils with SEND. Leaders must make sure staff have the support they need so they can sequence lessons well, and so build on all pupils' prior knowledge.
- Children in the Reception class get off to a delayed start; they quickly fall behind and rely too much on adult support. Leaders need to raise expectations, so children get off to a flying start, particularly in reading, writing and developing independence. Staff must also prioritise promoting high-quality speech and language opportunities for children who need them.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	123696
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10107579
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	107
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Kate Burrow
Headteacher	Derek Nevell
Website	www.huntspillfederation.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	10–11 February 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- West Huntspill Community Primary School is federated with another local school, East Huntspill Community Primary School. Senior leaders are responsible for leading both schools.
- The school was previously inspected in February 2016 and judged to be good.
- The school has four mixed-aged classes.
- The school operates a breakfast club, which is free for pupils in receipt of the pupil premium. The school also runs several after-school sports clubs.
- The governing body has recently undergone significant changes. There is a new chair and vice-chair in place. Governors are in the early stages of accessing training to help them fulfil their responsibilities.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is

failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

- We did deep dives in reading, writing, mathematics and history during the inspection. We met with senior leaders and curriculum leaders, considered pupils' workbooks, conducted lesson visits, and spoke with teachers and pupils. The lead inspector also spent some time looking at geography with school leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the SENCo, and together they looked at pupils' targets and discussed the support that teachers provide for pupils with SEND.
- The lead inspector spoke with the chair and vice-chair of the local governing body. He also spoke with the school's improvement partner, who works on behalf of the local authority.
- The lead inspector met with the designated leader for safeguarding. Together they considered how well staff maintain pupils' safety. The lead inspector also scrutinised the school's single central record.
- The team inspector analysed the school's attendance information, behaviour logs and records of exclusion.
- The lead inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View. In addition, he considered responses to the staff and pupil survey. Inspectors also spoke with staff and pupils during the inspection.

Inspection team

Nathan Kemp, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Spencer Allen

Ofsted Inspector

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