



Nunney First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123657
LEA Somerset
Inspection number 281527
Inspection dates 21 September 2005 to 21 September 2005
Reporting inspector Martin Kerly RISP

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

Type of school	First	School address	Catch Road
School category	Community		Nunney
Age range of pupils	4 to 9		Frome, Somerset BA11 4NE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01373 836429
Number on roll	71	Fax number	01373 836429
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr John Webb
Date of previous inspection	15 November 1999	Headteacher	Miss Fran Griffey

Age group 4 to 9	Inspection dates 21 September 2005 - 21 September 2005	Inspection number 281527
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school where numbers have risen steadily in recent years. The pupils are organised into three mixed-age classes: reception and Year 1, Years 1 and 2, and Years 3 and 4.

Pupils come from a wide area and range of backgrounds, including the village of Nunney, surrounding villages and the outskirts of the market town of Frome. They have a wide range of abilities. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly in line with the national average but their distribution through the school is uneven. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. There are gifted and talented pupils in all year groups. Almost all pupils are from white British families.

The experienced headteacher has been in post for some time, but the school has experienced many changes of other staff. Two thirds of the teaching team are new this term. The senior teacher took up her post at the beginning of this term.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school makes satisfactory provision for its pupils and gives satisfactory value for money. The school's own evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is more generous than this, because its systems for checking on its own performance are not rigorous and efficient enough. The headteacher has a heavy teaching commitment and is not always able to follow up issues identified as being in need of improvement. However, despite the difficulties associated with changes of staff, the school has made reasonable progress in improving weaknesses identified at the last inspection. After the period of staffing changes and uncertainties, the school now has sufficient capacity to move forward.

Standards vary from year to year because of the relatively few pupils in each year group, but the long term trend indicates that overall achievement is satisfactory as a result of sound teaching. By the end of Year 4, pupils have achieved well in reading and mathematics. There is probing questioning of pupils in lessons and teachers create a constructive working atmosphere, but sometimes pupils need more structured help with their writing. Progress is not as good in writing as it is in mathematics and reading, especially in Years 1 and 2. Reception children make satisfactory progress, reaching broadly average standards by the end of the year. They do well in mathematics. However, their activities and learning are restricted at times by the demands of being in a class with older pupils. Pupils in all classes make good progress in their personal development. Their attitudes and behaviour are good as are the care and guidance they receive from all adults.

What the school should do to improve further

- 1. Raise standards in writing, particularly in Years 1 and 2. 2. Set up a clear and efficient system for using the performance data that tracks the academic progress of pupils, so that it can be used easily by all members of staff. 3. Establish rigorous and systematic ways of checking on the school's performance, ensuring that any proposed changes to practice are clear and precise. 4. Review the provision for the reception children to ensure they experience the full range of experiences expected in the Foundation Stage curriculum and are extended in their independent activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress in most aspects of their work during the time they are in the school. With few pupils in each year group, standards fluctuate from year to year. Most children enter the Foundation Stage with skills broadly in line with those found nationally. They make satisfactory progress during the reception year and their levels of mathematical and personal and social development are frequently above national expectations by the end of the year. At the end of Year 2, standards attained in the annual tests in 2005 were below the national average in reading, mathematics and science, and well below in writing for the second year. More than one third of

these pupils did not achieve the basic minimum expected nationally in writing, although one quarter of the pupils exceeded the national expectation for their age in reading and mathematics, having achieved well. However, almost all the pupils, including those with special educational needs and the more able, achieved their realistic targets set for them, indicating sound progress. For some, this was from a relatively low starting point at the beginning of Year 1. Standards predicted for the current Year 2 in 2006 are higher and in line with the national average for reading, writing and mathematics.

Standards achieved by the end of Year 4 are above the national expectations for this age group in reading and mathematics, with a significant proportion of the pupils on course to exceed the national average in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Standards in writing are in line with national expectations. These pupils have made sound progress in the school and a number have achieved well, particularly in reading and mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good and this is a major strength. Parents appreciate how well their children settle into school. In the reception year, children achieve well in personal, social and emotional development and this is built on successfully in Years 1 to 4. Pupils enjoy their lessons and the whole school day. Their attendance rates are above the national average. They are caring and supportive of each other, for example being alert to those standing in the 'sad face' painted on the playground when feeling in need of a friend. They feel safe and secure and are aware of how to be healthy. Their behaviour is good in class and they report enjoying nearly all of their lessons. They enjoy the computers, new software and interactive whiteboards and are developing useful skills for future work.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are all good. This is an improvement in spiritual and cultural development since the last inspection. Pupils respond well in assemblies, offering reflective and thoughtful ideas. Links are being developed with a school in China, helping to strengthen pupils' awareness of other cultures. They are keen to take responsibilities around the school, such as operating the 'handicom' system, which they do well. They join in community activities from time to time, such as a local drama club and charity appeals. Members of the school forum are proud of their achievements, although they are less clear about how all their suggestions are reported to the staff.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is sound overall and leads to satisfactory achievement by the pupils. Teachers have established good relationships with the pupils and those in post for some time know them very well. There is a constructive working atmosphere in lessons. Very

good use is made of the teaching assistants (TAs) who take on significant responsibilities and make a good contribution to the pupils' learning, whether working with individuals, small groups or occasionally teaching the whole class following plans set by the teachers. They use good questioning skills to probe pupils and develop their learning. Teachers are beginning to make good use of the newly installed interactive whiteboards; their visual presentation motivates pupils and helps them to concentrate and understand.

Teachers plan different activities to meet the varying needs of pupils in the mixed-age classes but sometimes pupils are not provided with the level of structure they need to help them with their writing. Most of the pupils' work is marked, but teachers frequently concentrate on referring to the effort and presentation rather than how well the pupils have achieved in the particular concepts being taught and on what they need to do to improve. Some pupils are not clear about their short term targets.

Assessment and recording procedures are sound, with detailed and frequent arrangements for English and mathematics in Years 1 to 4 and in all six areas of learning in reception. The writing journals are a helpful strategy to monitor the progress of individual pupils' progress in writing. Pupils are assessed in other subjects when they come to the end of a unit of work, enabling teachers to plan the next steps and to construct the high quality annual reports to parents.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage curriculum is planned using national guidance for this age group. The children are in a classroom with Year 1 pupils so not all of the room is arranged to meet their particular needs. There is a balance of independent activities and time when an adult is working with them. However, at times they do not receive the level of adult input needed to extend them in their independent play activities and this limits their rate of learning. Access to the outside is not easy and only limited use is made of this area to support children's learning across the curriculum.

The infant and junior aged pupils experience a broad range of activities in all the subjects and aspects expected within the National Curriculum. Class timetables indicate the priority given to English and mathematics, occupying almost all morning every day. This leaves relatively little time for other subjects; but it is clear from pupils' work-books that all subjects are covered sufficiently. There is a rolling programme of topics taking into account the mixed-age classes; this helps to ensure pupils do not miss or repeat particular topics. The Healthy Schools Award reflects the good focus on such things as a healthy diet and taking exercise. There have been satisfactory developments in the information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum since the last inspection when it was a weakness, with the addition of new computers, software and interactive whiteboards. The newly arrived ICT co-ordinator has a clear strategy and ambitious plans for developing this subject further and to help pupils in their learning of other subjects. Music provision is good with the deployment of a specialist teacher. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop outdoor adventurous activities and they enjoy a very good range of after school clubs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The staff team and governors are fully committed to the care of all the pupils and this is successfully achieved, helping to ensure their good personal development which is carefully monitored. Each pupil is well known by the adults, and those who are particularly vulnerable are sensitively supported during the school day enabling them to play a full part in all activities. There are good arrangements for working closely with parents and with outside specialist staff. There are well documented procedures for dealing with such issues as health and safety and child protection and staff members have received substantial training. Pupils report that they feel secure and know who to approach if they have a problem. The annual reports to parents are very good indeed, with detailed guidance about what the pupils need to do next to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership team consists of the headteacher and senior teacher. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall but aspects of management need to improve. The headteacher teaches the Years 3/4 class for half of every week. This is a major commitment and restricts the time available to fulfil her leadership and management roles. She is fully committed to the success and well-being of all the pupils and works with determination to develop the quality of provision in the school and provide a broad range of experiences within and beyond the school day. The school is well regarded by parents and the number of pupils on roll continues to rise. The headteacher has worked effectively to ensure that the small staff team is not professionally isolated and has successfully led the work which culminated in the recent Investor in People award. The senior teacher took up her post at the beginning of the term, just two weeks before the inspection. She is developing a clear understanding of her new responsibilities, including the co-ordination of special educational needs and ICT, and has a keen awareness of what needs to be done.

The governors are effectively involved in the school and play a significant role in determining its strategic direction. They have led a number of initiatives, including the extensive building programme and participation in a national pilot to develop extended provision beyond the school day. They are well informed about most of the school's strengths and weaknesses and very well led by their relatively new chair who offers a good balance of support and challenge to the school.

Daily routines are clearly established and the school operates smoothly. There is good information available to parents to help them support their children. However, there are several weaknesses in the school's management. The school improvement plan has identified important priorities, for example to improve writing, but it does not spell out clearly enough what needs to be done if writing is to improve. Data on pupils' academic performance is collected but needs to be effectively organised so that teachers can access it easily and learn from the key messages it contains. The headteacher and other staff carry out a range of checks on how well the school is doing but these need

to be more systematic. The frequent changes of staff and limited time available to the headteacher have meant that some points identified have not always been followed through with sufficient rigour needed to raise standards. However, the formation of a new permanent leadership team working with the very effective chair of governors means that the school's capacity to improve is now secure.

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you probably remember, a team of two inspectors visited your school recently to find out how well the school is doing. Thank you for making us feel welcome. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing your work.

I am pleased to say there are a number of things that are good about your school, but there are also some things that need to get better. Here are the most important things that we found are good:

you behave well and care for each other so that everyone feels good

by the time you leave Year 4, most of you learn to read and do mathematics well

there are lots of clubs after school and you get the chance to go on adventurous activities away from school

your headteacher makes sure your parents are given good information about how well you are doing and what is happening in the school

the school governors work hard behind the scenes to help make your school a good place to be.

There are some things that need to get better and we have asked the governors, headteacher and staff to work on them together. They include:

helping you to improve your writing

making sure that the teachers have good systems for checking on how they are doing things and what needs to improve

finding ways of giving the children in the reception year more support when they are busy playing in their classroom and outside.

Thank you for helping us with the inspection. We hope that you carry on enjoying learning and helping each other and your teachers.