



East Huntspill School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123685
LEA Somerset
Inspection number 281538
Inspection dates 19 October 2005 to 19 October 2005
Reporting inspector David Curtis RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	New Road
School category	Community		East Huntspill
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Highbridge, Somerset TA9 3PT
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01278 782453
Number on roll	86	Fax number	01278 792523
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Valerie Shellard
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2000	Headteacher	Ms Alison Norcross

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This small three-class village school is near Highbridge. All pupils are White British. Sixteen pupils are identified with learning difficulties and disabilities. All are at the early 'school action' stage of support. No entitlement to free school meals has been taken up. In the last two years, the school has been affected by staffing difficulties linked to maternity leave and illness.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI 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. Inspection evidence is consistent with the school's judgement of its own effectiveness as being inadequate. The school gives inadequate value for money.

Children make a good start in the school and make satisfactory progress in reception. From Year 1 onwards, pupils do not make sufficient progress in their learning. By the end of Year 6, standards are exceptionally low in English and mathematics. There is significant underachievement amongst all groups of pupils. Most pupils behave well. However, a third of parents who returned the questionnaire expressed concerns about behaviour and a number of pupils in Year 6 are worried about bullying. Teaching is inadequate and is not meeting the learning needs of pupils by ability or age. Planning for pupils from more than one year group in the same class is not detailed enough. As a result, pupils are not challenged or extended in their learning, particularly in key basic skills. Pupils with learning difficulties are, however, well supported by learning support assistants.

Leadership and management are inadequate. There is an understanding of the weaknesses in standards and teaching. However, there is a lack of rigour in tackling these problems with the result that standards continue to fall. Progress since the last inspection has been inadequate, especially in relation to falling standards. At present, the school does not have the capacity to bring about the improvements needed.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards of pupils' basic skills in English and mathematics
- ensure that teaching meets the needs of all pupils by age and ability
- ensure that leadership and management have detailed and measurable targets for school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

By the end of Year 6, standards are exceptionally low. There are significant weaknesses in pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. Spelling and punctuation are particularly weak. Pupils do not use and apply these key skills in other subjects to a high enough standard.

Progress is inadequate, especially in Years 3 to 6. Standards in Year 2 are broadly average but too few potentially more-able pupils achieve the higher levels in national tests. No pupil has achieved the higher Level 3 in writing in the past six years. Pupils do not build successfully on their previous learning and this starts in Year 1.

Children start school with standards expected for four-year-olds. Standards at the end of reception are average. Most children meet the goals they are expected to achieve. They make satisfactory progress from the time they start school, especially in communication, language and literacy.

The results of the 2005 national tests for pupils in Year 6 fell significantly below the school's targets. Results in English and mathematics were significantly lower than in 2004, although there was an improvement in science. There is a clear downward trend in English and mathematics. Currently, the targets set by the school and the local education authority, for pupils in Year 6, are far too demanding and pupils do not achieve them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Most pupils enjoy school and this is shown by levels of attendance meeting the national average. In lessons, pupils work hard when work is challenging. Older pupils openly admit that sometimes, 'work is too easy' or 'it is too hard'. They say that this causes them to become bored and lose interest. Behaviour is satisfactory, although older pupils express anxiety about bullying. This primarily happens at lunchtimes and is linked to football. A number of older boys and girls expressed unhappiness about the way they are treated by lunchtime supervisors, especially in 'being shouted at'.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils take great delight in receiving awards for their efforts, especially house points. Most know right from wrong and pupils say that relationships in the school have improved recently. Through personal, social, health and citizenship lessons, pupils develop a satisfactory awareness of issues linked to health and their well being. Most adopt safe practices when working in lessons.

Pupils enjoy sport and taking part in after-school clubs. They know why it is important to drink water regularly and to eat healthily. They enjoy taking part in events, such as Harvest Festival and the country dancing festival at The King Alfred School. Weaknesses in their basic literacy and numeracy skills limit their future economic well being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Teaching and learning are inadequate. This is a key factor in pupils not making sufficient progress in their learning. As a result, standards are exceptionally low by the end of Year 6. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is satisfactory and enables children to develop a satisfactory range of knowledge and skills.

Difficulties in staffing in the previous school year, especially for pupils in the mixed-age Year 4, 5 and 6 class, have caused inconsistent expectations for pupils' progress and a lack of challenge in many lessons. Teachers' assessment of pupils' learning is not

sufficiently accurate and activities do not build successfully on what pupils already know and can do. Relationships through the school are positive and, in the most effective lessons, pupils are interested, listen well and confident to 'have a go'. Learning support assistants are often used well to support groups of pupils especially those with learning difficulties so they take an active part in lessons. Teachers have set targets for individual pupils' future learning but they do not indicate clearly enough how pupils can improve. Pupils are not fully aware of their own targets for improvement. Planning is not used sufficiently well to ensure that lessons meet the needs of all pupils in the class by age or ability.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is sound and prepares them satisfactorily for the next stage in their learning. A strength is the school's provision for information and communication technology. Most pupils say they enjoy their lessons and activities. Those pupils spoken to were particularly enthusiastic about their sport and games activities. They said they enjoy art lessons and their history topics, such as the Aztecs. The staff are currently reviewing their planning to look for ways to use pupils' interests more to stimulate good learning. These ideas have not had time to have an impact on standards. Pupils' basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics are not sufficiently promoted in other subjects. Pupils enjoy going on educational visits, including the costume museum in Bath and the school camp. The school makes good use of visitors, including the local vicar, to widen pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Most pupils feel safe in school and are confident that their teachers will listen to them if they have concerns. The school has dealt successfully with a previous issue whereby there was conflict in relationships between pupils. However, it has not fully addressed parental concerns about behaviour. Child-protection procedures are fully in place. The school takes sufficient care to ensure that pupils work in a safe and secure environment. However, it has not fully addressed pupils' concerns about midday supervision.

Support for pupils' academic development is inadequate. Targets set for pupils are not based on a clear understanding of pupils' current levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. As a result, neither teachers nor pupils know what needs to be done next in order to improve learning. This is a key reason in pupils not making sufficient progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate. As a result, standards are exceptionally low and pupils' progress is poor. The headteacher knows the school's weaknesses and that standards are falling. However, she has not taken action quickly enough to deal with this major issue. The plan of action to identify what needs to be done in order to raise standards does not have clear and measurable outcomes. Ideas that have been put in place are not monitored and there are no means by which success can be measured. As a result, the school does not currently have the capacity to improve. The role of subject co-ordinators is not sufficiently developed, especially in English. The headteacher is not getting enough support from senior and experienced colleagues in school improvement. Recent changes to the governing body mean that it is more aware of the issues. Governors now ask challenging questions and are moving away from relying totally on the headteacher to run the school. As the result of recent initiatives by the headteacher, progress is now starting to be made in using data from the results of national tests, particularly to identify pupils who need extra help. An improved programme of support for these pupils is now in place but the effectiveness of this is not being monitored closely enough.

The school regularly seeks the views of parents and pupils through questionnaires, and of pupils through the school council. The recent revision of the school's mission statement and code of conduct is a positive outcome of this process. A number of parents expressed concerns about leadership and management. This is linked to staffing difficulties which in fairness are outside of the headteacher's control.

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?	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	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	No	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4	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?	4	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?	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	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	4	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	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	No
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

East Huntspill Primary School New Road East Huntspill Highbridge TA9 3PT

20 October 2005

Dear Pupils

Thank you very much for making us feel welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and in the playground. Special thanks go to Year 6 for the time they spent talking to us during the afternoon.

These are the things that we liked about your school:

- you told us how much you enjoy sport and the after-school clubs
- your singing in assembly was good
- you enjoy taking responsibility, such as being on the school council or being a librarian
- you enjoy art and project work in particular.

We think that your school could be even better than it is now. In order to improve your school, we feel that your headteacher and teachers need special help to do this.

These are the most important things that need to be done and you will need to help too.

- your work needs to get better in English and maths
- we have asked your teachers to make sure that the work you do always sets you new challenges and helps you to learn more
- we have asked those who run the school to make plans to help the school to improve, and to check that things get better.

Yours sincerely

David Curtis Lead inspector