

Hamp Nursery and Infants' School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123681
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	292747
Inspection dates	16–17 May 2007
Reporting inspector	David Curtis

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glenys Warlow
Headteacher	Pat Jordain
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2002
School address	Rhode Lane Bridgwater TA6 6JB
Telephone number	01278 422012
Fax number	01278 431264

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is of average size. Twenty children attend the Nursery in the mornings, and a similar number attend each afternoon. At the end of Nursery, up to one third transfer to other schools. At the start of Reception, children from the Nursery are joined by others from a wide range of pre-school experiences. Seven pupils are at the early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities in Years 1 and 2 is well above the national average. Children start school with standards which are significantly below expectations, especially in early language skills and personal development. Many come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'I just love everything about this school', is the view of one Year 2 pupil, which would be echoed by many more in this good school with outstanding features. The most immediate and striking feature of the school is the outstanding personal development and well-being of pupils. From their very first day in Nursery or Reception, children enjoy school and want to learn. Excellent provision in the Nursery and good provision in Reception gives children a really good start to school. They make good progress in their learning and, although many do not quite reach the goals they are expected to reach, this represents good achievement from their starting points. In the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, behaviour is exemplary. In lessons, pupils listen attentively and show impressive levels of concentration. They often are bursting to answer questions and to use the interactive whiteboard. Pupils are prepared exceptionally well socially for their future economic well-being and rising standards mean that their academic preparation is improving year on year. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics, but they are improving. Standards in science are good. In relation to where they started school, pupils' achievement is good.

Outstanding care, guidance and support underpin pupils' excellent personal development. There is very high quality support for pupils, especially in child protection and safeguarding children. All staff, including the very good teaching assistants, provide guidance so that all pupils flourish. This includes those with learning difficulties as well as those learning English as an additional language. The good curriculum has a significant impact on good achievement. A particular strength is the transition from the Foundation Stage to Year 1. As a result, pupils have a smooth path to the National Curriculum as and when they are ready.

Without good teaching and learning, children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2 would not achieve as well as they do. Teachers' relationships with pupils and their behaviour management are excellent. Teachers make lessons interesting and exciting so that pupils are eager to learn. The successful teaching of a recently introduced phonics programme is having an immediate and discernible impact on raising standards in reading and writing. Developing pupils' speaking and listening skills is a vital priority and teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in engaging them in conversation. Teachers have a wealth of information about pupils' progress. However, it is not in a user-friendly or manageable format so that teachers can see which groups of pupils may be underperforming and in need of additional support in order to raise standards further.

Underpinning all of the school's success is good leadership and management. The dedicated and experienced headteacher has an excellent understanding of the needs of pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds. Every single member of staff supports her in her quest to give children and pupils the best school experience possible. Their success shows that the school has good capacity to improve further. The school improvement plan and subject leaders' action plans are good but they do not have precise enough measures to show whether targets have been met. Similarly, whilst much of the monitoring of teaching and learning by leaders is good, points for improvement are not always identified so that a sharper focus on further improving teaching and learning can take place.

What the school should do to improve further

- Introduce a simplified and user-friendly system for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress in each year group that enables staff to see at a glance where there are groups who may be underachieving.
- Ensure that the school knows when targets in the school improvement plan have been achieved.
- Ensure that when teaching and learning are monitored, improvement points are identified and followed up, especially in relation to standards and progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Taking into account their low starting point, pupils' achievement is good. Despite standards being below average in reading, writing and mathematics, this represents good progress for most pupils. Through effective teaching and more intensive support from the headteacher and teaching assistants, the school is seeing a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 2B and above in national assessments at the end of Year 2. Standards in science are good and have a significant impact on pupils' strong understanding of healthy lifestyles. Displays of work show pupils' work in art and design and technology to be of a good standard. The quality of singing heard in assembly was outstanding.

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage. They do particular well in communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development. Although most do not meet all of the goals they are expected to reach, their achievement is good.

Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because of high quality support from teachers and teaching assistants. Those learning English as an additional language receive similar support and consequently make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils really enjoy singing in assemblies and they join in prayers with conviction. Through science, in particular, pupils show a real sense of the wonders of the natural world around them. They enjoy taking responsibility for jobs around the school. They handle equipment safely and sensibly in practical activities. They talk most enthusiastically and knowledgeably about keeping fit and healthy. Pupils have designed and made 'healthy lunchboxes' which show their very good understanding of the need to eat healthily.

In the Nursery and Reception, children's personal, social and emotional development is good. Children are happy, secure and confident. Their behaviour is exemplary. Children's relationships with each other and with adults are excellent. Across the school, children and pupils with learning difficulties, together with those who are learning English as an additional language, play a full part in its day-to-day life.

Whilst attendance is below average, the school is doing everything possible to work with a nucleus of families whose children are regular absentees.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching in the Foundation Stage gives children a good start to schooling. Teachers and teaching assistants quickly establish good relationships and set very high expectations for good behaviour. Activities are planned to interest and engage children in learning. Questioning is particularly effective in encouraging and developing children's speaking and listening skills. Teaching of key skills in reading, writing and number is good.

The strengths of teaching continue in Years 1 and 2. It is the consistency of teaching across the school that is so effective in pupils making good progress. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching of phonics is very successful in raising standards. Teachers make lessons interesting and engage pupils with challenging questions. Teaching assistants are fully briefed every morning as to their role for the day. As a result, there is very effective teamwork which supports pupils of all abilities, including those identified as gifted and talented, those with learning difficulties, and those learning English as an additional language.

Teachers assess pupils regularly and thoroughly. However, the information gained from assessment is not in an easy-to-read format so that teachers get an instant overview of the performance of each year group. As a result, potential underachievement is not identified soon enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good and successfully supports children's learning. The transition from the Foundation Stage to Year 1 is very effective, especially for pupils who start Year 1 still needing to meet the goals expected in Reception. Pupils have good opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, especially in science. They do not spend enough time using their information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects. The curriculum meets successfully the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. It is adapted well for those learning English as an additional language so that they make good progress.

For an infant school, there is a good range of well-attended after-school activities which are greatly enjoyed. The school uses visitors and educational visits to support and enhance pupils' learning. Good links with the neighbouring junior school enable pupils to use that school's ICT suite for the whole-class teaching of key skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

All statutory responsibilities are fully in place. Arrangements for child protection and safeguarding pupils are excellent. The school works in very effective partnership with outside agencies and partner schools to support learning. The home-school worker is very proactive in meeting parents to encourage good attendance and punctuality. Each morning she meets and talks to parents who arrive late with their children. Across the school, teaching assistants give pupils very effective support and this impacts positively on those with learning difficulties,

together with those learning English as an additional language. The 25% of parents who returned questionnaires expressed clear support for the school's work with their children.

Academic guidance is very good. Pupils have targets for literacy and numeracy which they know and understand. They take great delight in achieving them. Teachers give pupils clear guidance on how well they are doing and how they can do even better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, supported effectively by all staff in the school, is totally dedicated to providing the best possible education for her pupils, many of whom face very challenging difficulties out of school. There is an absolute commitment to the need to continue to raise standards. Current initiatives, including the new phonics programme, which are successfully increasing the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2B and above in national assessments, are testimony to the school's success. There is regular monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and subject leaders. Currently, there is insufficient emphasis on identifying and following up improvement points arising from monitoring. The school improvement plan, together with subject leaders' action plans, are clearly focused on raising standards. However, neither sets of plans are tight enough in identifying how the success in implementing them will be measured.

The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is good and contributes much to the successful way in which children become full members of the school community. Similarly, the effective leadership and management of pupils with learning difficulties is a key factor in the good progress made by pupils with learning difficulties. Support for pupils with English as an additional language is equally good.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

18 May 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Hamp Nursery and Infants' School, Bridgwater, Somerset TA6 6JB

Thank you so much for making us feel so welcome when we came to your school. We enjoyed meeting you, including those of you who spoke with us at lunchtime. It was good talking to you in lessons and around the school too. I am delighted to tell you that you go to a good school. Among the things that make it so good is how happy you are and how much you enjoy lessons. Your singing in assembly was the best I have ever heard in an infant school. These are the other things that we thought the school does really well, with your help, of course:

- You are making really good progress in your phonics work.
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- You work hard in lessons and are so keen to answer questions and to use the interactive whiteboards.
- You really enjoy the clubs that you attend after school.
- All the adults in the school are there to help you and that makes you feel safe and happy in school.

There are a few things that would make your school even better. These really are to do with the adults but, of course, you can help them by continuing to behave well and show them how much you like school. So the adults need to:

- Make sure that they have a simple chart on which they can see how well each class is doing so that they can give you more help if you need it.
- In the same way that you have targets, the school has targets too. At the moment, the school does not know when it has met its targets and we think it should.
- When other teachers watch your lessons they need to make sure they tell your own teacher how she can help you to make even better progress in your learning.

Yours sincerely

David Curtis Lead inspector