

# Reckleford Community School and Children's Centre

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123726
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	292761
<b>Inspection date</b>	6 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Huard

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	123
School	
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Adam Dyer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sonia Floyd
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 May 2002
<b>School address</b>	Eastland Road Yeovil BA21 4ET
<b>Telephone number</b>	01935 475938
<b>Fax number</b>	01935 475938

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a small infant school. It serves an area of considerable deprivation and there is a high percentage of pupils with learning difficulties. Attainment on entry is very low, particularly in personal development and speech, language and mathematical skills. A large number of Polish families with no English language skills have recently moved into the area and this means that nearly half the pupils in school are now learning English as an additional language.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Reckleford is a satisfactory and improving school and provides a sound education for its pupils. The school's motto of 'Moving forward, Ever learning', is aspirational and beginning to be reflected in the way in which staff, parents and the local community are involved in the education of the pupils. Pupils enjoy school. This is illustrated by their satisfactory but improving attendance and their enthusiastic participation in lessons. Behaviour is good and pupils readily take on responsibilities such as acting as 'buddies' to younger children. Their good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and a sound but growing awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle both contribute to their good personal development and well-being.

Children receive a good start to their education in the Nursery and Reception classes. A wide range of exciting activities, designed to stimulate the imagination, enables them to achieve well. In the school overall, standards are below average and achievement is satisfactory. Standards in mathematics are broadly average and pupils achieve well. However, standards in reading and writing are significantly lower than those expected, although achievement is satisfactory. This is partly because pupils recently joining the school, with English as an additional language, are not yet confident with reading and writing. There are some specific weaknesses, particularly in writing. The current focus on learning letter sounds is having a positive impact on reading and spelling. However, there is too little emphasis on consistently promoting basic skills such as punctuation and the spelling of simple words.

The school has worked hard to make its curriculum relevant to all pupils. It has identified good strategies to improve writing and the motivation and achievement of boys. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. However, it is only satisfactory overall because changes made have not yet had a full impact on standards attained. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers plan lessons carefully to interest and motivate their pupils, and pupils are keen to learn. They make good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English for the first time. However, assessments are not always used effectively to plan tasks for more able pupils. They are not consistently challenged and this restricts their learning. The staff are committed to the all-round development of pupils and on a personal level look after them well. The personal care and support they provide are good. As a result, pupils feel safe and well cared for. As one commented, 'It's like a big family'. Taken together, the care, guidance and support for pupils are only satisfactory as the marking and advice they receive to help them with their academic work does not always tell them what they can do to further improve.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher and senior management team provide clear direction to the school. They know how well the school is doing and inspectors agreed with their self-evaluation of the school. Information from data is used appropriately to identify specific areas for improvement so that all pupils can perform to their potential. Suitable action has been taken to improve standards in mathematics but more needs to be done to improve writing and the achievement of more able pupils.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more focus on basic skills such as spelling and punctuation in order to raise standards in writing.
- Improve the quality of marking so that pupils know what they need to do to improve their work.

- Use information from assessments more effectively to ensure that more able pupils are appropriately challenged. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well because a range of exciting activities is provided for them. The 'Plumber's Workshop' in the nursery provides a particular stimulus for boys and has a positive impact on their speech and early writing skills. Despite making good progress, children do not have all the skills expected, particular in literacy and numeracy, when they move into Year 1. In the school overall, standards are below average and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards in mathematics have risen in the last year and pupils' progress has been good because of the action taken to improve their skills. Reading and writing are significantly below average. This is mainly because of the many pupils who are learning English for the first time. They are learning to communicate effectively because of the many opportunities offered to help them speak, but skills in reading and writing are taking longer to acquire. The school has taken appropriate action to improve the reading and writing of all pupils. There are still weaknesses in writing because spelling and punctuation skills are weak. More able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could because tasks are not always matched closely enough to their needs. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress towards their targets because they receive effective support.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. They have good opportunities for reflection, clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and show care and consideration for one another. These, together with their growing understanding of the many different cultures in Britain today, make a significant contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils contribute well to the school and local communities. They make their views known through their contributions in circle time, which are then discussed at whole-school staff meetings. Raising money for charities gives pupils a good awareness of wider social and economic issues and an appreciation of those less fortunate. However, preparation for the world of work is only satisfactory because achievement in English and mathematics is not as good as it could be, particularly for more able pupils by the time they leave the school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage. Activities are imaginative and exciting and show a good understanding and awareness of the needs of individual children. Elsewhere in the school, pupils' work shows that teaching in mathematics has improved. Teachers generally provide clear explanations and, consequently, pupils are able to tackle their tasks with confidence. However, more able pupils are not always consistently challenged by the tasks they are set. Pupils benefit from working collaboratively and discussing their ideas with others.

Teaching assistants give good support, particularly to pupils with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language. Marking is satisfactory but does not focus sufficiently on what pupils need to do to improve their spelling and punctuation, and this restricts their learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from stimulating activities in all areas of learning. There is a good balance of creative play and small-group teaching, which develops children's confidence well. The broad curriculum is enhanced by a good range of out-of-class activities, visits and visitors. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about special events such as 'Book Week' which enrich their learning. The clear focus on literacy and numeracy has been strengthened by the recent emphasis on activities to raise standards in writing, although these have yet to have a full impact on standards reached. Whilst provision for pupils with learning difficulties and those at the early stages of learning English is good, the needs of more able pupils are not sufficiently planned for. A good programme to support pupils' personal development is effective in raising pupils' self-esteem and attitudes to learning.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Good care is taken of pupils, who say they feel safe and that they know they will be assisted if they have a problem. The school is taking effective action to deal with poor attendance and this is now improving. Child protection and other arrangements to safeguard children are robust. Good personal support is given to pupils with learning difficulties, those who have emotional needs and those at the early stages of learning English. Individual targets give most pupils a satisfactory understanding of what they must do to raise performance, but marking does not always give pupils sufficient guidance as to how they can improve. Arrangements to help children settle into school, and to transfer to junior school, are smooth. They help pupils become confident in dealing with new situations. A strong focus is given to helping parents support children's learning, for example, through appointment of a parent support adviser and by staff learning other languages, such as Polish, to aid communication.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has a strong vision which is firmly focused on raising standards. She has introduced a system whereby leadership responsibilities are defined using the Early Years curriculum headings, which is particularly apt for this school where many pupils are still working within the Early Years curriculum when they move into Year 1; this smoothes the transition to the National Curriculum. Leaders fulfil their role satisfactorily, and their role in checking standards and identifying what can be done to remedy weaknesses is developing appropriately. The senior management team clearly understands what the school needs to do to improve and is taking suitable action to bring this about. The impact of changes to improve mathematics in the school is evident. Standards in reading and writing are rising, but more needs to be done. The recently improving results demonstrate that there is a sound capacity for further improvement. The governors have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are becoming more involved in strategic planning and school evaluation. The

school is beginning to use data appropriately to check its own performance. For example, reading and writing were identified as concerns, and training for staff was provided to help remedy this. There is sound monitoring of planning, lessons and pupils' work which assesses the quality of teaching and learning in order to ensure that pupils make sufficient progress. The school listens carefully to the views of parents and pupils and takes action to respond to their concerns where appropriate.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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**

7 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Reckleford Community School and Children's Centre, Eastland Road, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 4ET

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved. We think your school gives you a sound education and is working hard to make it even better. This is what we thought about your school.

- You behave well and are really keen to learn.
- You are doing better in mathematics this year.
- The curriculum covers all the subjects you are supposed to learn and you enjoy the visits and visitors, which brings learning alive for you.
- Teachers help you make satisfactory progress in your learning and you say you enjoy your lessons.
- The teachers and staff take good care of you while you are in school.
- Your headteacher leads the school well and understands what must be done to make your school even better.
  
- There are some things we think can be improved.
- You need more help with spelling and punctuation in order to improve your writing.
- Some of you who are more able are not always given enough challenge in the tasks you are set.
- We think that marking could show you more clearly what you have to do to improve your work and move on in your learning.

We are glad you enjoy your school and hope you will continue to work hard. Very best wishes

Mrs Christine Huard Lead Inspector