

High Ham Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123761
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	292777
Inspection date	15 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Lorna Brackstone

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	158
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janie Drongoole
Headteacher	Jane Rosser
Date of previous school inspection	12 November 2001
School address	High Ham Langport TA10 9BY
Telephone number	01458 250735
Fax number	01458 252748

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This average-sized school serves the surrounding rural villages and towns in a socially favourable area. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. Attainment on entry into school is as expected. The headteacher has been in post for one year.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that has some outstanding features. The vast majority of parents agree with this and have rightly identified that the success of the school is very much down to the headteacher's excellent leadership qualities. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. It has improved since the last inspection because, as one parent explained, the headteacher 'is someone who makes things happen and manages to motivate everyone else too'.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They feel safe and know that their opinions and views are valued. As one parent explained: 'the children are active participants in all the changes and the atmosphere is always positive'. Pupils maintain a healthy lifestyle and all achieve well in their academic studies. By Year 6, they have attained standards that are significantly above average. These standards, coupled with their exceptional commitment to the school community and their very high levels of initiative mean that they are extremely well prepared for the future.

Pupils are provided with outstanding care, support and guidance. The good quality of teaching and learning they receive is reflected in their very enthusiastic approach to school. Teaching assistants are used very well to support pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Pupils benefit greatly from evaluating their own work and use this well to help them in the next stage of their learning. However, whilst there are good examples of where teachers mark books thoroughly and help pupils improve their work, this approach is not consistent throughout the school.

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of these young children and the good quality teaching ensures that they progress well. The recent addition of an outdoor area has improved the breadth of provision and this is being developed further to maximise its use as a learning resource. The school provides a good curriculum for all. This is enhanced very well through a wealth of extra activities that promote high quality personal skills. The school plans effective links between history, information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology. However, senior staff are aware that further links could be developed between other subjects to make learning even more meaningful for the pupils.

Leadership and management is good. The headteacher has an exceptionally clear vision for the school. She works well with the new senior management team who have a good understanding of what needs to be done in the future. Governors provide exceptional direction for the school and use their own professional expertise to greatly support the school's improvement and challenge senior staff.

The exceptionally strong partnership with other schools has been extremely well used for the benefit of the pupils. For example, an ICT technician, who is funded by the local cluster of schools, ensures that all computers are working. This means that learning time is not lost due to faulty equipment. Links with local businesses are also extremely strong. For example, sponsorship enabled pupils qualifying for a national competition to be transported and accommodated near the event. Excellent relationships are also enjoyed with the on-site pre-school, making transition into the Reception class seamless. Whilst a very small number of parents expressed criticism of the communication between home and school, the vast majority

felt that they were 'kept well informed on all matters relating to their children' and 'all staff are very approachable and it is easy to raise minor concerns if needed'.

What the school should do to improve further

- establish more links between subjects to make learning more meaningful
- share good marking practices so that pupils consistently receive information on how their work could be improved.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards achieved at the end of the Reception Year are mainly as expected, but the majority of children attain higher levels in personal and social development and communication, language and literacy. Current standards at the end of Year 2 are above average and this reflects a good improvement on the last two years. These standards have risen because there is now greater staff stability in Years 1 and 2. Current standards are significantly above average at the end of Year 6, with pupils maintaining the outstanding levels in English which were achieved last year. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, achieve well. The curriculum now lends itself more to the interests of boys, which has rectified the differences in achievement of boys and girls. For example, boys have responded well to the use of ICT to record historical findings.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Nearly all parents agree that, as one parent wrote, 'the whole child is developed regardless of their ability', and inspection findings fully endorse this view. Children in Reception quickly gain confidence and develop good personal and social skills. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 know that the reintroduction of hot meals provides them with a healthy and hearty lunch option. The handy water cooler is used frequently for regular drinks. Pupils know how important exercise is and participate fully in the many sporting activities. They adopt safe practices, particularly in the playground where they play sensibly. Attendance is good. Attitudes and behaviour are exceptional and school rules are fully understood. The very well trained peer mediators and play leaders ensure that the playground is a happy place to be. There is a whole-school agreement about dealing with anti-social behaviour and pupils are clear about what to do if this happens.

Pupils take great pride in representing their school in sporting events and the array of awards is an indication of their success. They proudly accept the challenge of competitions and have recently shown extremely high levels of personal enterprise when given £2 each to use in any way they wished for fund-raising. Pupils are knowledgeable about different customs and cultures. They talk excitedly about their Samba drumming, they converse in French and are familiar with different religious celebrations. Their high quality basic skills and their wider knowledge of the world around them prepare them extremely well for adulthood.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching in Reception is good because staff have a clear understanding of the specific needs of this age group and provide interesting resources that motivate them. In Years 1 to 6, pupils have a good understanding of what they are learning because teachers pose key questions to them at the start of each lesson. These are then revisited at the end of the session to check how much has been understood. The good support provided by teaching assistants ensures that pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are fully involved in lessons and are working on activities that have been carefully planned to meet their needs. Whilst pupils are actively involved in working out the next step in their learning when their work is completed, the quality of marking is not consistent through the school. This means that pupils do not always receive pointers for improvement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Reception children enjoy a curriculum that is exciting and based around practical activities, such as watching bubbles rise in a bottle and then making their own! Older pupils receive a curriculum that is balanced and meets their needs well. The good opportunities for outings to see Roman remains at Caerleon and the residential trips to Pinkery in Exmoor are beneficial to their learning. However, not enough links are planned between subjects to help pupils make connections in their learning. The good personal, social, health and emotional development programme promotes their own well-being very well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Procedures to ensure that pupils are kept safe and secure, including those relating to child protection, are exceptionally well established and staff are very familiar with them. Personal development is monitored extremely closely and pupils are confident that adults look after them exceptionally well. The school gives extremely sensitive support with bereavement and difficult family matters. The Reception children settle very quickly in to the school community because they are given outstanding support from staff and older pupils. Good personal support and guidance is provided for pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities, particularly as a result of the school working closely with outside agencies to receive the best help possible.

Pupils' progress is assessed and evaluated extremely well. Teachers pose very pertinent questions at the start of each lesson and pupils use this very well to guide their learning. Literacy and numeracy targets are adjusted very carefully to ensure that the pupils have a very clear understanding of what they are aiming to achieve. They are supported in the next step of their learning by using a 'traffic light system', which shows their teachers how well they have understood their learning.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Parents rightly identify that the school has been transformed under the dynamic leadership of the headteacher. She has established a new enthusiastic senior team that has both vision and drive. Working closely with the outstanding governing body, senior staff have created a realistic plan for the school's future development. Because the senior leadership team are very new, the plan is in the early stages of being implemented. Rigorous tracking systems to check pupil progress and the evaluation of teaching and learning have enabled senior staff to successfully improve standards in the current Year 2, narrow the gap between the attainment of boys and girls throughout the school and ensure that all pupils advance at their own pace. Parents of more able pupils are particularly pleased about this. As one parent explained, the 'gifted and talented group provides our daughter with a bit extra to get her teeth into'. These improvements clearly illustrate the school's good capacity for moving forward.

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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?	1
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	2
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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

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?	2

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	1
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

15 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of High Ham Church of England Primary School, Langport, TA10 9BY

Thank you very much for making me so welcome at your school. It was very interesting seeing you at work and play. I would like to say a special thanks to the group of pupils I met who told me all about life at High Ham School. I really enjoyed talking to you and think you and all your classmates are a credit to your school.

Your school provides you with a good education and it has some outstanding features. You feel safe and cared for because the school looks after you extremely well. It gives you very good support with your learning. You make good progress and, by the end of Year 6, reach standards that are well above average. You behave exceptionally well and enjoy your learning. This is because teaching is good and staff provide an interesting range of activities that make you really want to learn.

You are justifiably proud of your school and I was impressed with the successful way in which you sort out any problems at playtime. You particularly enjoy the visits out of school, which help you learn more about different topics. I was interested to hear all about your residential trip to Pinkery, which is a firm favourite with the older pupils. I think that your fund-raising challenges and the sporting competitions you enter prepare you extremely well for the future.

The adults in charge of the school are leading and managing it well. They are very determined to always give you the very best education.

In order to make it even better I have asked the school to make sure that good marking practices are shared so that you all get consistent information on how to improve your work. I have also asked the school to plan more links between subjects so that your learning makes better sense to you.

Once again, thank you for your help. Keep doing your best and working with the adults to make sure that High Ham becomes an even better school.

Yours sincerely

Lorna Brackstone Lead Inspector