

# Spaxton CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123790
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	292790
<b>Inspection date</b>	10 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Shirley Billington

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	72
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Deborah Mcinerney
<b>Headteacher</b>	Sally Evans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 May 2002
<b>School address</b>	Spaxton Bridgwater TA5 1BS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01278 671409
<b>Fax number</b>	01278 671853

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a small primary school drawing pupils from the village of Spaxton and outlying areas. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average. Many of these pupils join the school in Years 3 to 6. When children start school in Reception their skills and knowledge are broadly in line with expectations. The school is part of a community learning alliance and is involved in a variety of activities with other local schools.

## 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 provides a sound education. It is particularly successful in ensuring good personal development for pupils. Parents are very appreciative of this. 'The children are happy caring individuals...I like the holistic approach ...' are typical of comments made about this aspect of the school's work. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They make an excellent contribution to the running of the school by taking on a range of responsibilities and voicing their ideas through the school council. They are frequently involved in festivals and other special events within the community and respond enthusiastically to opportunities to raise funds for a variety of causes. Those pupils at the top end of the school are mature and responsible and well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. There is some variation in how well different groups of pupils do as they move through the school. Children in the Reception Year get off to a good start and make good progress so that most are achieving above expected levels at the beginning of Year 1. This good foundation is not built on as effectively as it could be and the rate of progress in Years 1 to 6 slows, although it is satisfactory. While standards are broadly average at the end of Year 6, there is some variation in different subjects. Standards are above average in science and all pupils achieve well in this subject. In English and mathematics, standards are broadly average but there is scope to raise them further. Pupils develop very good skills in reading and standards in this aspect of English are high. Recent work to improve achievement in writing to the same high levels is beginning to have a positive impact, particularly in Year 6. There is still more to do in other year groups, but the school recognises this and is already extending opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes across the curriculum. Throughout the school, more able pupils could achieve more, particularly in mathematics.

Teaching and learning, the curriculum and care, guidance and support for pupils are all satisfactory. There are good features, particularly in the way that pupils' experiences are extended through an impressive range of visits, visitors and participation in a range of events with other local schools. Good support for pupils with learning difficulties, who often join the school mid-year, ensures that they settle quickly and their needs are met.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has strengthened systems to track pupils' progress and to involve all staff and governors in reviewing standards and achievement. Information is beginning to be used to set targets for pupils' attainment, but these are not sufficiently ambitious, particularly for the end of Year 2, in order to build on good progress made in the Reception Year. A range of strategies is used to check on how the school is doing and action plans are in place to improve areas of weakness. However, the plans do not have measurable outcomes so it is difficult to evaluate how effective new initiatives have been. The school has a realistic view of its strengths and areas for improvement and has sound capacity to improve further.

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.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that more able pupils make the progress that they should, particularly in mathematics.

- Improve pupils' rate of progress in Years 1 and 2 to build on the good start they have in the Reception Year.
- Strengthen action planning so that there is a sharper focus on measurable criteria to assess the effectiveness of strategies for improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. From an average starting point children make good progress in the Reception Year and almost all are working above expected levels at the start of Year 1. In Years 1 to 6, progress is satisfactory but it varies across subjects and for different groups of pupils. Pupils generally do well in science and standards at the end of Year 6 are above national averages. Progress in English is satisfactory and standards are broadly average. However, while pupils achieve very high standards in reading, they do not do as well in writing and the school is rightly working to improve achievement in this area. Standards in mathematics are average but performance is slightly weaker in this subject than in English or science. The main reason for this is that more able pupils do not always reach the levels that they should. Pupils with learning difficulties benefit from a range of support programmes and make steady progress. They often do particularly well at the top end of the school so that by the end of Year 6 they are working at broadly average levels.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and work well independently and in collaboration with others. Relationships across the age groups are very good and pupils themselves see this as a real strength of the school, agreeing that 'we're always helping each other'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' appreciation of the wider world and their place in the community is enhanced by participation in a range of events and learning about life in places such as Kenya and Japan. Their understanding of the diversity of modern British society is more limited and their awareness of the practices of different faiths is confused. Pupils have a good awareness of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle, understanding why they should eat fruit for a snack and take regular exercise. They are enthusiastic about daily 'wake and shake' sessions and opportunities to participate in a wide range of sporting activities. Pupils have a good understanding of safe practices and are clear that there is no bullying in school.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Throughout the school pupils show good levels of motivation and are keen to succeed. Older pupils often have very good insight into how they learn, explaining, for example, 'If we get it wrong everybody accepts that – it encourages us to try everything'. Teachers generally make good use of resources to demonstrate key teaching points and to help pupils understand new ideas. In Years 5 and 6, very focused and explicit teaching about story structure and literary devices is effective in boosting pupils' writing skills. However, strengths in the teaching of writing are not apparent in all year groups. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to lessons, often by giving individual pupils or small groups some extra help so that they understand how to tackle their work. Just occasionally the pace of lessons slows and not enough is achieved

in the time available. Expectations of what pupils might achieve are not always as high as they should be and this slows the rate of progress, particularly for the more able.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

Children in the Reception Year experience a broad and well-balanced curriculum that takes good account of their learning needs. They thrive in a small class and greatly enjoy the range of opportunities to learn through exploration and first-hand experiences. In Years 1 to 6 the curriculum is being adapted to provide more opportunities for writing for a range of purposes and to raise standards in this area. This is beginning to have a positive impact, but there is more to do, particularly in Years 2 to 4. Work is planned to improve provision for mathematics, particularly to extend opportunities for problem-solving. However, this is at the early stages and it is too soon to see the impact on standards or the effect in terms of boosting the achievement of more able pupils. Good adaptations are made to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and to provide a short-term boost for those who need a bit of extra support, for example with reading or spelling.

The curriculum is enriched well through visits and visitors who share their interests and experiences with pupils. There are very good opportunities to participate in a range of events with other schools through cluster activities. These include competitive sports, activities for gifted and talented pupils and 'play and learn' days for younger children.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Individual pupils are well known and good pastoral support ensures their good personal development. A comprehensive range of programmes is in place to help those who need extra support with learning or with social skills. Structured systems for tracking pupils' progress through the school are now in place. Although these are still being refined, there is helpful information available to give teachers a good view of what pupils have already achieved and what might be expected of them in the short and long term. The targets set as a result are mostly realistic and well founded but those for the end of Year 2 do not take enough account of the good base of skills that many children have at the start of Year 1. Pupils themselves have individual targets and those in Years 5 and 6 are very aware of what they need to do to improve their skills in writing, talking confidently, for example, of the need to use more personification and metaphor.

Effective steps have been taken to improve attendance by discouraging parents from taking holidays in term time. As a result, attendance levels have risen and are broadly average.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership has been strengthened by the introduction of a range of systems to analyse the school's performance and plan for improvements. Analysis of data from national tests has highlighted the need to raise standards in writing and mathematics and action plans have been put in place for this. However, the plans do not have clear targets by which to evaluate how successful the initiatives have been. Training has taken place to improve the teaching of mathematics but it is too early to see the effect of this in raising standards and providing

sufficient challenge for more able pupils. The school makes good use of links with a range of organisations and other local schools to enhance learning opportunities. A review of staff responsibilities has led to better sharing of staff expertise, so that, for example, the information and communication technology (ICT) coordinator teaches throughout the school.

Many governors are new but they are well organised to fulfil their responsibilities and gain a view of the school's work. They have an accurate understanding of key areas for improvement.

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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>	<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	3
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	3
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	1
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	2
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	2

### 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

11 May 2007 Dear Pupils

Inspection of Spaxton C of E Primary School, Spaxton, Bridgwater, TA5 1BS

You may remember that I visited your school recently to see how you are getting on. Thank you to all of you who showed me what you were doing in lessons and the Years 5 and 6 pupils who talked to me about what you enjoy about school. A particular thank you to those who explained the work of the playground buddies and told me how you are helped to keep healthy. It was great to hear about your daily 'wake and shake' sessions to get your brains going. I thought you might be interested in what I am saying in my report. Your school provides you with a sound education and there are some particularly special things about it.

These are some of the 'highlights':

- You are helped to become mature and responsible so that you are well prepared for the move to secondary school and later life.
- You get involved in a good range of activities, such as clubs, working with special visitors and going on visits. I know that you older ones really enjoyed your visit to 'The Matthew' ship in Bristol.
- The youngest children get off to a good start and learn a lot in their first year in school.
- Those of you who need some extra help to learn have some good programmes to help you catch up with things like reading and spelling.

I have asked the school to do three things now:

- Make sure that those of you who are quick to learn make as much progress as you should, particularly in mathematics.
- Build on the good start that Reception children get so that learning moves on as much as it should in Years 1 and 2.
- Sharpen up the plans for improving how you are helped to learn so that everybody knows how well the improvements have worked.

With very best wishes

Shirley Billington Lead inspector