

Haselbury Plucknett Church of England First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123816
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	292801
Inspection date	13 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Diane Wilkinson

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	85
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anwen Hoskins
Headteacher	Gill Evans
Date of previous school inspection	27 May 2002
School address	North Street Crewkerne TA18 7RQ
Telephone number	01460 72833
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Age group	4–9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Haselbury Plucknett C of E First School is a small school where some pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. A considerable number of pupils travel from outside the local area. All are of White British heritage and come from broadly average family backgrounds. Attainment on entry is below that usually found. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average, although it varies between year groups.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory and improving school with strengths in some aspects of its work. In the past few years, children's standards on entry have fallen to below average because the school now draws on a much wider cross-section of the community. This is part of the reason for the lower standards in the Year 2 national test results, although the school has been slow to adapt to the changing profile of pupils, particularly those who have specific learning needs. However, over the last 18 months, the decline has been halted and standards are rising.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Since her arrival in September 2006, the new headteacher has introduced effective systems for monitoring the school's work and tracking pupils' progress. These provide comprehensive information resulting in accurate self-evaluation that allows the school to pinpoint where specific improvement is needed. The headteacher has set a very clear sense of direction to target and address weaker aspects. She is well supported by staff and governors in this work, so weaknesses are addressed successfully. This gives confidence that the school is well placed to improve further. Parents recognise the effectiveness of recent changes and one wrote, 'We are extremely pleased with the developments in school since September'. Governors carry out their duties well and play an effective role in school development. However, subject leaders are still increasing their expertise in helping to monitor and support the school's work.

Care, support and guidance are good. This is a caring school where pupils feel safe and happy and do well in their personal development. Most pupils behave well and bullying is rare. Pupils are confident that adults listen to their concerns and will sort out any problems. Pupils clearly know what to do to keep themselves healthy and safe and they contribute well to community events, particularly through sports competitions. Academic support and guidance is only satisfactory despite pupils having effective targets to help them improve. This is because staff miss opportunities to refer to targets when marking pupils' work and do not always involve them in helping to recognise how they could do better.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, and good in Reception where children's needs are well catered for. In other year groups the pace of learning slows when pupils chatter in class or mark time when they have finished their work. The curriculum is satisfactory and offers pupils a broad range of learning opportunities. It meets most pupils' needs well, although the activities identified for higher attaining pupils are not always challenging enough. Extra-curricular activities are good, especially for sport, and recent improvements to the school buildings have considerably enhanced learning.

Academic achievement is satisfactory overall. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good, which enables Reception children to make good progress. Most reach the standards expected by the time they enter Year 1. Progress in other year groups is satisfactory. Standards at the end of Year 2 are close to the national average overall and are above average in reading and mathematics. However, in the past, pupils did not make enough progress in writing, resulting in standards being below average in last year's national tests. Recent developments have improved progress, which is now satisfactory, and standards in writing are rising. At the end of Year 4, standards are at the expected level in English and science and above it in mathematics.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of targets by using marking to identify how pupils can reach their targets and by giving them more chances to evaluate their own work.
- Strengthen the role of subject leaders in monitoring and supporting school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Over the past few years, standards have declined partly owing to the changing background of pupils and lower standards on entry to Reception. Reception children make good progress as a result of an effective range of activities well matched to their needs. By the end of Reception, most children reach the standards expected for their age except in some aspects of mathematical development, which are below average.

Progress in Years 1 to 4 is satisfactory overall. Standards, which had been declining since the last inspection, have begun to rise over the last 18 months because of improved teaching. In 2006 overall standards in the Year 2 tests were close to the national average and were above average in reading and mathematics. However, standards were lower in writing because pupils had not made enough progress in this aspect. Since September effective strategies have been put in place to address the weakness in writing and pupils are now making satisfactory progress. Standards by the end of Year 4 are in line with those expected in English and science, and are above expectations in mathematics.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school, especially the many sporting activities on offer. Despite some pupils taking holidays in term time, attendance is broadly average. Relationships are generally good. Pupils say bullying is not an issue and adults are good at helping them sort out any disagreements. Most pupils behave well, although some talk in lessons when they should be listening to the teacher. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and children in Reception also do well in this aspect. Very well-planned assemblies and links with the local church encourage good spiritual development. For example, in an outstanding assembly led by a visiting farmer, the theme of safety and care on a sheep farm helped pupils understand Jesus' role as the 'Good Shepherd'. An effective range of art, music and drama activities supports pupils' good understanding of Western and other cultures.

Pupils have a good knowledge of how to achieve healthy and safe lifestyles through regular exercise, sensible eating and understanding how to keep safe on roads or when visiting places. Pupils feel safe and secure in school because they know adults take good care of them. Pupils' contribution to the community is good and they take part in many local events, particularly for sport. They are developing a satisfactory range of skills to help them in future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning in Reception are good. Good attention is paid to meeting children's needs in the classroom they share with Year 1. Children's personal, social and early reading skills are promoted especially well.

In other year groups teaching is satisfactory. Planning now builds well on pupils' previous learning and specific work is prepared to meet the needs of different ability groups, although there is an overuse of worksheets that sometimes lack sufficient challenge for the higher attainers. Teaching assistants play an important part in supporting these groups and in helping meet the needs of different year groups in the mixed-age classes. Teachers explain and demonstrate things well, although in whole-class sessions they do not always provide practical tasks that engage all pupils. When this happens some pupils begin to talk when they should be listening, and this is not always checked by staff. In group or individual tasks most pupils work productively. However, teachers do not always check on their rate of progress and when this happens the pace of learning sometimes slows. Marking helps pupils to correct their errors, although it does not always indicate what they have achieved or how they can do better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The broad curriculum pays good attention to ensuring that pupils build on and extend their learning. The curriculum for children in Reception effectively supports their good progress. The revised curriculum for information and communication technology is good, but has not yet had time to raise standards. A strong emphasis is given to English and mathematics, although the school recognises that better links need to be established between subjects to help improve pupils' literacy, numeracy and computer skills. The new buildings provide improved accommodation for learning activities, especially for physical education. The good personal, social and health education programme and the strong focus on physical education enhance pupils' personal development and well-being. Enrichment activities, particularly for sport, are good. These help pupils to develop positive attitudes to school and to do well in competitive sports.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's caring ethos helps pupils to feel valued and confident that they are well looked after. One parent wrote, 'Staff have never once failed to impress me with their attitude towards the children'. Regular and thorough safety checks are carried out and arrangements for child protection and the vetting of staff are good. Learners at risk and those who have learning difficulties and disabilities are identified early, allowing good support programmes to be put in place to help them achieve effectively. Strong systems in place to encourage good behaviour and hard work help ensure personal support and guidance is good. This year a good system has been put in place to track pupils' academic progress and provide pupils with individual improvement targets in English and mathematics. However, teachers do not always refer to these in lessons and pupils are not involved enough in checking what more they need to do to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher provides effective leadership and is very clear about how to help the school improve. A thorough evaluation of the school's work and pupils' progress has been carried out, resulting in accurate identification of areas of weakness. Many changes have been introduced recently which are starting to bring improvements. The school consults well with parents and

pupils and good links have been established with other schools and agencies to enhance pupils' education and welfare.

Governors are well informed, carry out their statutory duties well and are fully involved in school evaluation and development. Together with the school staff they share the headteacher's vision and are working hard to bring about further improvement. The clear development plan establishes effective priorities, but does not indicate how the success of the strategies can be judged. Subject leaders are increasingly playing a supportive role in school improvement, although they are still developing some aspects of their monitoring role.

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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?	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	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	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	2
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
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?	3
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	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	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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and being so friendly and helpful. I particularly want to thank the pupils who gave up their lunch time to speak to us. We think your school gives you a satisfactory standard of education, and that it is improving. There are already some good things about its work.

- You have a good headteacher who has a very clear idea of what needs to be done to help your school improve. She is well supported by governors and together with staff she is working hard to make your school even better.
- Adults take good care of you and help you to make good progress in your personal development.
- You enjoy school and most of you behave well and get on well with each other.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep yourselves healthy and safe.
- You have many extra things to do, especially in after-school clubs, and you do very well in lots of sports.
- Children in Reception are well taught and have interesting activities to do so they make good progress.
- By the end of Year 2, standards in reading and mathematics are above average and they are improving in writing. By the end of Year 4, standards in mathematics are above those expected for this age.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- make better use of your targets by referring to them when your work is marked and by giving you more chances to check how to achieve them
- make sure that staff who have responsibility for different subjects keep a check on how well you are doing and how well new programmes of work are helping you to make progress.