

# East Huntspill School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123685
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	298931
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Wheeler HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	70
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lesley Wilsher
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison Norcross
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 October 2005
<b>School address</b>	New Road East Huntspill Highbridge TA9 3PT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01278 782453
<b>Fax number</b>	01278 792523

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

## Description of the school

This is a small school with three mixed age classes. It has a large playground with a range of fixed equipment and a quiet garden area. The majority of pupils walk or cycle to school. There are very few children from minority ethnic groups who are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to that in other schools. The school has been through a number of staff changes in the past year due to illness, but the position is now becoming more stable. There is an independently run pre-school on the school site.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This school has made tremendous progress since becoming subject to special measures in October 2005 and is now a good school. In accordance with Section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The headteacher has provided extremely effective leadership and has developed a strong staff team with children at the centre of all plans for improvement. Pupils feel valued and included in all aspects of school life which results in good personal development and well-being. They are confident and want to succeed, including those pupils who find learning more difficult. Pupils are happy and positive about school, they are proud of their achievements. The school's caring and supportive approach helps pupils to become independent and the older pupils particularly enjoy taking on a range of responsibilities. This promotes good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and helps pupils to be productive members of the school community and beyond.

Children start school with broadly average skills and make good progress in the Foundation Stage because of good teaching and a curriculum which makes learning fun. Pupils are enthusiastic and eager learners as they are taught well and are given the help they need to do their best. The curriculum offered throughout the school makes learning enjoyable and exciting. Pupils also have many opportunities to develop their interests through clubs, visits and visitors. They are making good progress and most are on track to meet or exceed their challenging targets. Most pupils know what their targets are and readily comment on their progress towards them. The disruption in staffing for the Year 5/6 class has resulted in not all achieving as well as they might, especially the more able. The organisation and the deployment of staff are outstanding, giving pupils better opportunities to learn in class and in focused group work.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has driven improvement forward since the last inspection with great determination and has demonstrated great resilience during many upheavals along the way. This has resulted in a strong staff team who know why the school has moved forward and are proud of their role in the successful impact on pupils. The school has a thorough plan for improvement but its self-evaluation does not always emphasise the positive impact on pupils of all it provides. There has been good partnership working with the local authority and its officers have provided well targeted support and guidance to staff and governors. The clear direction provided by the headteacher and the way the issues arising from the last inspection have been tackled indicate good capacity for further improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Given the significant changes of teachers in the Year 5/6 class, ensure that these pupils make sufficient progress and reach the standards they are capable of, especially the more able.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

The school's own assessment evidence and observation of lessons, monitoring information, and national test results show that pupils make good progress and achieve well. Standards are average overall and most of the more able pupils reach above average standards. However, not all of the older pupils are reaching the standards expected due to some inconsistent teaching in the recent past.

In 2006, progress made in Key Stage 2, whilst still below national expectations, was better than in the previous two years. Careful monitoring of pupils' progress and the setting of clear targets help pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to learn next. This is improving in Years 5 and 6. There is now more consistent use of assessment and agreed measures of success across the school. Regular scrutiny of pupils' work is enabling early identification of concerns and targeted additional activities to support pupils' progress. This includes opportunities for extending the higher attaining pupils in the lower juniors and in Key Stage 1 through increased challenges in class or through working with groups of older pupils. Pupils in Year 2 are benefiting particularly from being taught as a separate group for English and mathematics and they are making good progress towards the standards expected nationally.

Test results at the end of Year 2 in 2006 showed pupils reaching above average standards in reading, writing and especially in mathematics, where the standards were significantly above those of other schools nationally. In writing and mathematics, there is an improving trend. Those pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities also make good progress as they benefit greatly from working with the excellent learning support assistants in class or in groups working on specific programmes to boost their learning. In the Foundation Stage, children are making good progress and are well on the way to reaching or exceeding the standards expected by the time they move to Year 1.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils enjoy school very much and show great enthusiasm in lessons. They work hard, achieve well and want to come to school. As a result, attendance is good. Improvements in their basic skills and opportunities to take on responsibilities will support them very well in the future. Pupils are given time to reflect and consider their actions and their learning. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and a strong sense of fairness. They mix well at break times and report that there is no bullying; they know what to do if it occurs. The school has developed good links with a village in India, but pupils do not yet have a full understanding of the breadth of cultural heritage within our society.

Behaviour is good throughout the school. Pupils fully understand the routines and the high expectations of staff which help them to feel safe at school. They are well aware of health issues and enjoy the healthy eating club. Pupils know that their views are taken into account and regularly complete surveys on features of school life. Mutual respect between staff and pupils is evident. They are also involved in many aspects of village life through carol singing, harvest home celebrations and the local football team which provides the school team's kit, as well as collections for local and world charities. Pupils are proud of their school and believe they benefit from having small classes and a well equipped playground.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching is at least good and much was outstanding in the lessons observed. Pupils enjoy the creative and interesting opportunities staff provide to make learning more enjoyable. This was demonstrated when a Year 5 girl, involved in a very active science experiment, commented with a huge smile, 'This is the best day of my life!' The atmosphere created in lessons is busy and focused. Planning is thorough with good emphasis on what pupils

are expected to learn, based on what they already know. Good account is taken of the varying age groups within these mixed age classes to ensure that pupils make good progress, particularly those who have learning difficulties. Staff use questioning extremely effectively to assess pupils' learning and to provide additional challenges as appropriate. As a consequence, pupils are extremely enthusiastic and eager to offer their opinions and demonstrate their knowledge. Marking is not yet consistent in all classes, but often gives clear indications of what pupils have done well and how they could do better. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 are becoming particularly adept at assessing their own learning.

Since the last monitoring visit, the older pupils have regained positive attitudes to learning and in their own abilities. They now participate more fully in lessons and readily express informed opinions. As misconceptions are handled very sensitively, pupils are not afraid of 'having a go'. Pupils also do very well because of the quality of resources, including skilled staff. Optimum use is made of facilities in the school and its grounds.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and appropriately planned to motivate pupils to do their best. It very effectively meets the needs of most pupils, particularly those with learning difficulties, through carefully matched activities. The curriculum has not been so closely matched to the older pupils' needs, but this aspect is improving. Teachers are making good links between subjects so that pupils can use what they have learnt in English and mathematics in other areas, for example in history. There is good use of homework to support what pupils have learnt in class.

The school takes every opportunity to enrich the curriculum through visits and visitors. These are many and varied including performing at a concert with other schools, going on a residential visit to Swanage, a role play day on the Tudors, and input from a nurse and oral hygienist. There is also a good range of clubs available including gardening, art, chess and recorders which pupils appreciate and enjoy.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

Children settle well when they start as transition is made easier because of the pre-school on site. Pupils are particularly well cared for and feel safe at school as there are good systems in place for child protection. The provision of appropriate support is a high priority and this has been achieved through excellent deployment of staff along with creative timetabling and organisation to ensure pupils have every chance to do as well as they can. This has been difficult recently as staff absence has had an impact on the level of support and guidance given to the more able pupils. The learning support assistants continue to provide exceptional care, guidance and support, particularly for the pupils who find learning more difficult.

Staff are very skilled at helping pupils to work through any difficulties so that they come up with the answers themselves. Feedback from teachers and support staff is very good at letting pupils know they value what they have achieved and indicates what could make their work even better. This ensures that most pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The headteacher is providing extremely good leadership and is ably supported by the new senior teacher. The school team has worked diligently on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection and has achieved good levels of success. Improving achievement has been a priority with successful outcomes, due in no small part to the determination of the headteacher to improve teaching and learning and raise standards. A great deal of effort has been put into achieving stability in staffing for the Year 5/6 class and this is looking promising. Parents are very supportive and their views are regularly sought with good account taken of what they say.

Strategic planning has clear actions which are monitored and evaluated thoroughly, although the school's self-evaluation is not yet sharply focused enough on outcomes for pupils. Staff have readily taken on specific responsibilities to support school improvement. This is particularly evident in the excellent work of the special educational needs coordinator, who ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities have carefully targeted support and very effective individual education plans. The new leader for English has carried out a detailed audit of provision for her subject and has accurately identified what needs to be done to improve teaching and learning in English with a strong focus on phonics for the younger children. The school is also working hard to attain the Healthy Schools award. This project is being well led and is already having an impact on lunchtimes and parents are also engaged in the process.

The governors are doing a good job even though they are still going through changes. The chair of governors has a good grasp of where the school needs to improve and is helping the rest of the governing body to provide appropriate support and challenge. The school has a strong team which is working extremely hard to make sure that all pupils aim to 'be the best they can be'.





## 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>	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	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<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	2
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	2

### The quality of provision

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

<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>	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	1
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 very much for helping me to feel so welcome in your school, for answering my questions, and for showing me your work. As you know, I have visited your school lots of times to see how things are going and many of you know me quite well. I am so pleased to tell you that you will no longer need me to visit as everyone at your school, including you, has worked hard to make East Huntspill a good school.

Here are some of the things I liked best:

- you help your school to be a happy place and you behave very well
- learning is fun, as I saw in your lessons – the experiment in the 'cave' in Class 3 looked exciting!
- you work hard and do well
- you know your targets and are eager to reach them
- you know about healthy eating and taking exercise – 'wake and shake' was fun!
- you listen very well in class and are keen to answer your teachers' questions
- you enjoy all the clubs run at school
- your headteacher and staff do a good job in helping you to do your best.

Here is something which will help your school to be even better:

- there have been lots of changes in Year 5 and 6, so your school needs to make sure that you all make as much progress as you can, especially those of you who find work a bit easy – you can help by always trying your best.

I hope you continue to have a good time at East Huntspill School and I wish you the very best for the future.