

Hambridge Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123645
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314654
Inspection date	13 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Chris Grove

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Clark
Headteacher	Iain Crabtree
Date of previous school inspection	26 January 2004
School address	Hambridge Langport TA10 0AZ
Telephone number	01460 281370
Fax number	01460 281894

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated in a village and is much smaller than the average primary school. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low, and very few pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The school has the Healthy School award and has secured Activemark. The headteacher was appointed in September 2004.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

'There is a great vitality about the school which encourages children to be happy and caring, following the example set by the headteacher.' This accolade in one of the responses to the parental questionnaire illustrates well the principal reason why this has developed into a good school. Since his appointment, the headteacher has provided very good leadership. Parents comment that the school has become the centre of the local community through such innovative projects as 'Talkschool', through which contacts are made with schools elsewhere in the world. Consequently, the school is very well regarded. Effective support by other staff with leadership responsibilities contributes to the good leadership and management. This, in turn, has led to the school's very positive ethos and good team spirit among teachers and support staff. Parents appreciate the good links with the community, other schools and providers of extra-curricular activities to enrich pupils' learning. The range of improvements made in response to the previous inspection attests to the school's good capacity to improve further.

As a result of the strong, inclusive ethos of the school, pupils are thriving. Their personal development is good, and some aspects are outstanding. In class, pupils are attentive and behave considerately in response to staff who model courtesy and kindness for them. In their relationships with adults, they develop a good level of maturity and confidence in themselves. Parents recognise this. One wrote: 'Hambridge has gone from strength to strength, shaping our children into delightful and polite people.' These personal qualities contribute well to pupils' learning, and are demonstrated in their outstanding enjoyment and excellent contributions to the school and the wider community.

Pupils achieve well. When they start school, their attainment is broadly average. Pupils make good progress across the school because the quality of teaching is consistently good. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 are higher than they were at the last inspection and show that pupils' attainment is generally a little above average. Pupils continue to make good progress from Year 3 to Year 6. In the national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6, their standards have been consistently above average, and especially so in mathematics.

Pupils are well taught. Teachers have high expectations. Planning and teaching methods are well devised to meet the needs of pupils' differing levels of attainment. Longer-term assessment through tracking pupils' progress is good. However, short-term assessment of pupils' learning is not as effective. There is insufficient focus on improvement in the marking of pupils' work. The curriculum serves the needs of pupils well, as is shown by their good achievement. This is because of the well-planned emphasis on basic skills, including provision for writing, which has improved. Parents and pupils value the excellent range of enrichment activities beyond the conventional curriculum, in which participation is high. Pastoral care and guidance are good. Staff know pupils very well and provide good support. Pupils trust their teachers and good relationships are an important factor in developing their confidence and ensuring their well-being. However, the recently introduced arrangements to set pupils targets to improve their writing are not being well enough used. There is not sufficient clarity in the wording of targets, and not enough feedback on progress towards their achievement.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents speak highly of the good provision. They note their children's happiness at school and how much the children like the adults. Staff make learning fun and enjoyable. They are skilled at engaging children in exciting activities such as making bread, celebrating the Chinese New Year and spelling simple words on the interactive whiteboard. Consequently, children achieve well and join Year 1 with skills and knowledge in all the areas of learning that are in line with those normally expected. Children's personal, social and emotional development is good, as staff skilfully ensure that they become increasingly independent and confident learners who negotiate with and help each other. The indoor class provides more stimulating learning opportunities than the outside area, although improvements have been made. The Foundation Stage is well led, and accurate assessment ensures that tasks are matched precisely to children's different needs. Intervention to support children and parents is swift and effective and demonstrates the good level of care provided by the staff.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make better use of target-setting arrangements in order to clarify more precisely for pupils how they can improve their work, and to provide more consistent feedback on progress towards achievement of their targets.
- Improve the consistency of teachers' marking, especially of writing, so that pupils clearly understand the next steps in their learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Test scores in reading reflect higher standards than results in writing. This is evident at both key stages. However, measures already taken by the school have led to more pupils reaching the higher Level 5 standard in writing in 2007. This was a considerable improvement on the previous year. Particularly effective teaching leads to consistently good progress in mathematics through Key Stage 2. As a result, more than half of the pupils attained the higher Level 5 standard in the Year 6 tests in 2007. Pupils with a range of learning difficulties make the same good progress as other pupils. This is because of the good quality of teaching in class, as well as good support from additional teaching staff and the learning support assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Consequently, pupils learn to be thoughtful and reflective about themselves and others in a safe and happy environment. They know how to keep themselves and others safe and healthy, and join in enthusiastically with early morning 'Wake and Shake' sessions and sponsored bike rides for charity. They quickly learn to appreciate others' beliefs and backgrounds because of the outstanding curriculum enrichment. Not surprisingly, in such circumstances, attendance is above average. The school council plays a significant role by representing the views of others and discussing how to improve the environment for everyone's benefit. Many older pupils take on genuine responsibility, by being members of the Children's Learning Parliament, running lunchtime clubs for younger children or acting as playground leaders or 'buddies'. In these ways, and as

a result of the good progress pupils make in basic skills, they are well prepared for their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan well to meet the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment. The good pace of learning and good classroom organisation are motivating for pupils. The learning support assistants make a good contribution to supporting pupils with particular learning needs. Specialist support staff have also helped to develop pupils' skills, for example, in information and communication technology (ICT). Outreach work by the local secondary school has provided specialist teaching in mathematics, science and French. Pupils are given a good understanding of their current standards of work but are not so sure what to do next to improve. They are also not sufficiently encouraged to assess their own work. Whilst there are instances of good marking which show pupils how to improve, this is not always the case.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

'Big Write' and other initiatives are improving the opportunities for interesting contexts for writing. However, the school recognises that opportunities are sometimes missed to forge links between different subjects to give pupils further scope to develop their thinking and creativity, and also their writing. The school website illustrates well the opportunities for pupils to explore new activities such as fly-fishing and 'imagineering' (fun activities related to engineering), as well as sport and music. Excellent links with Japan, France and Poland enable pupils to learn simple phrases in other languages and to develop their appreciation of other cultures. The involvement that most pupils have in sports clubs and with a variety of healthy eating initiatives contributes to their good understanding of the need to keep fit and healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Risk assessments are in place and staff have been appropriately trained in child protection issues so that practice is rigorous. Learners who have additional needs are identified early and good arrangements put in place to support them and to ensure their good achievement. The same is true for pupils who are at the early stages of learning English. Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and, where necessary, staff intervene to offer well-planned support. Some writing targets are written in overly complex language, making it too hard for pupils to understand what they have to do to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Monitoring and evaluation activities, undertaken until recently mainly by the headteacher, have been good. The consistently good quality of the school's teaching, improvements to the writing curriculum and excellent enrichment provision are testament to the effectiveness of leadership. In 2007, the school exceeded all of its challenging targets in English and mathematics.

Despite some recent developments in leadership capacity, however, the headteacher continues to shoulder a very wide span of responsibilities, thus limiting the potential for further school improvement. Parents are rightly very appreciative of what has been achieved. The governance of the school has improved and is now satisfactory. Governors know many of the school's strengths, and how it has improved. They have developed the capacity to play the role of 'critical friend'. However, governors have not assured themselves in a sufficiently timely way that the school is in all respects statutorily compliant. This means that some legally required policy documents are only now in the process of being put in place.

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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	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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	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

15 February 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Hambridge Primary School, Langport TA10 0AZ

We would like to thank you very much for your help during the inspection. We liked seeing you at work in your classrooms and talking to you at playtimes and lunchtimes. Hambridge Primary is a good school. It is a very happy place for you as pupils. There are lots of things we thought were good about your school. These are the most important ones:

- You really enjoy school, and your attitudes and behaviour are good.
- You are making outstanding contributions to your school and community.
- You have very good relationships with the teachers and other adults who take very good care of you, and this helps you to learn well.
- Your headteacher and the other school leader know what is good about your school and want to make it even better.
- You have a special feeling about your school, and staff make sure everyone is included.
- The extra-curricular clubs and activities are outstanding, and help your personal development well.
- Pupils in Year 6 are doing well in the National Curriculum tests and, right across the school, you are all making good progress.
- The teaching in your school is consistently good.
- The teachers have improved the curriculum for you so that it is more exciting.
- Most of your parents are very pleased with the school.
- Your school has good relationships with your parents, other schools and the people they ask to come in to help you.

We have asked the school to help all of you to make even better progress by:

- Improving the target setting so that you understand better what your targets are, and get told more often how close you are getting to achieving them.
- Improving the marking of your work, especially your writing, by telling you what you could do next to improve your learning.

You can help too by asking your teachers what you need to do to make your work even better.

We wish you every success in the future. We really enjoyed our time in your school.

Chris Grove Lead Inspector

15 February 2008

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Lead Inspector