

Misterton Church of England First School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123769
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314711
Inspection date	6 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Malcolm Greenhalgh

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	
School	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Maureen Shepley
Headteacher	Gillian Harcombe
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2003
School address	Misterton Crewkerne TA18 8LZ
Telephone number	01460 72745
Fax number	01460 72745

Age group	4-9
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school situated in the middle of Misterton, a village close to Crewkerne. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. There have been a significant number of staff changes since the last inspection in 2003. The school was re-awarded the Healthy School Award in 2007.

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 with some outstanding features. It has made very good progress since the last inspection. Parents are extremely supportive of the school's good work and a typical comment sums up the school well: 'We feel that each child is given quality time while being taught, resulting in high personal development which boosts their confidence and gives them their individual character'.

Pupils achieve well in all classes. Children get a good start in the Foundation Stage and make good progress. This is maintained through the rest of the school and, as a result, standards are significantly above average at the end of Year 2. The pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 and 4. The school is aware that it needs to improve the teaching of sentence construction, pupils' understanding of what they read and the way they solve problems in mathematics if it is to shift progress from good to outstanding. The pupils' personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. Their behaviour, relationships with others and their attitudes to learning are excellent. They enjoy learning in all situations and attendance is excellent. There is a strong family atmosphere in the school and all staff know the pupils extremely well. Pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve and have an excellent understanding of how to live healthy lives. This healthy approach to living is because the school has placed much emphasis on achieving the Healthy Schools Award and through a strong programme of personal, social and health education. Pupils make good contributions to the school and local community and make good progress in key skills so they are well prepared for the next stages of their education. The excellent care, support and guidance provided by the school, the good teaching and the very good level of learning resources in the classroom and playground have contributed significantly to this. Together, these stimulate the children's interest as well as supporting their learning effectively. The quality of the curriculum is outstanding. The Foundation Stage has an excellent balance between inside and outside activities and the school provides some excellent additional activities such as drama productions and French. Planning of the curriculum is flexible and meets the needs of different groups of pupils. It maximises learning by changing its focus to meet the different interests of the pupils, such as introducing a topic on transport for a group of boys with a particular interest in it. This has made a substantial difference to their levels of motivation and interest in other parts of the curriculum.

Leadership and management are good. The school has made very good improvements since the headteacher arrived four years ago. The senior leadership team work extremely well together and are keen to ensure the school becomes outstanding. This has helped to ensure that pupils make good academic progress and sustain high levels of personal development. Self-evaluation procedures are good, especially in knowing how well the pupils are progressing, but the school development plan does not match this rigorous approach. Staff and governors provide good support to the senior leadership team and are happy to take responsibility and work closely together. The school has created very good working relationships with parents as well as other schools in the area and the local authority. Overall, very good progress has been made since the last inspection and the school is well positioned to do even better.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children settle into school very quickly because of the care and support the school organises and provides during term time and before the start of term. The quality of teaching, the curriculum and learning resources are good and this enables the children to make good progress in nearly all aspects of their learning. Children make satisfactory progress in writing skills and in mathematical calculation. The outdoor area for the Foundation Stage children is a significant improvement since the last inspection and adds greatly to the experiences the children receive.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the teaching of sentence construction, pupils' understanding of what they read and the way they solve problems in mathematics so that pupils make outstanding rather than good progress.
- Improve the quality of the school development plan so that it prioritises more effectively and creates a more rigorous approach to school improvement.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress and attain standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are significantly above the national averages at the end of Year 2. Children start school with broadly average attainment, although this varies from year to year and is sometimes above the national average. They settle very quickly into the Reception class and make good progress in nearly all areas of their learning. The school has identified additional improvements needed in sentence construction, high order reading skills and problem solving in mathematics. Nevertheless, in Years 1 and 2, pupils continue to make good progress in these subjects and, by the end of Year 2, their attainment is significantly above the national averages. In Years 3 and 4, pupils also make good progress and continue to attain standards above national expectations. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress because they are given good quality support from teachers and teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

This is a key strength of the school and reflects the strong emphasis the school puts on developing the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development as well as their academic development. Pupils feel extremely safe, keep very fit and healthy and really enjoy school. Relationships and attitudes to learning are excellent. The pupils, from a very young age, are thoughtful, polite and keen to learn. In lessons, pupils work with others in a very supportive manner and are always happy to give guidance to their peers when needed. Their behaviour is very good and contributes to everyone feeling safe, secure and very happy to come to school each day. Attendance is excellent. The school's promotion of personal development through specific projects helps to ensure that pupils develop all aspects of their social well-being extremely well. They also make good contributions to the school and the wider community through the 'Summer Fete' and the contributions made to charities such as the shoebox initiative. Family learning activities, working together during drama performances, responsibility for class budgets and the awareness of the need to recycle things make significant contributions to their lifelong learning skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teachers plan well to meet the pupils' academic needs. This enables them to make good progress from the Reception class through to Year 4. The effective use of a wide range of resources helps to stimulate pupils' interest and encourages their eagerness to learn. This was evident during a quick 20-minute phonic session in all classes at the start of the day when pupils were very keen to learn new words and sounds. Teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for assessing their own work and pupils are very clear about what they need to do next to improve. Marking is well linked to learning objectives, and a colour-coding system is used effectively by all teachers to identify strengths and things that need to improve. This ensures pupils have a clear understanding of what to do next and how to make good progress in their work. The school is very aware that to improve teaching to outstanding, improvements are needed in providing more opportunities for pupils to produce better quality sentences, to have a better understanding of the books they are reading and to develop better problem solving skills in mathematics.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to excel in all areas of the curriculum, including French. Lessons are planned well and are flexible enough to meet the needs of different abilities and ages in the mixed-aged and mixed ability classes. There is a very good emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum, and recent changes to the plans for the development of reading, writing and mathematics are beginning to be applied by teachers to accelerate the progress pupils make. There are very good opportunities for pupils to learn in exciting and creative ways, including the use of the school's outdoor environment and during trips to local places of interest. These help to make the curriculum relevant to the pupils' needs and experiences. There is an excellent emphasis on the pupils' personal development in all lessons and this is complemented by a strong focus on personal, social and health education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school provides a caring and supportive family atmosphere where pupils feel very safe and secure. This enables them to enjoy their activities, make good progress academically and excellent progress in their personal development. The school meets all statutory requirements in relation to child protection and risk assessment. The successful focus on healthy lifestyles has ensured that the pupils are very conscious of how to eat healthily and to take regular exercise. The school has developed very good academic tracking systems which are analysed thoroughly. Governors have worked tremendously hard to make the school a safer place. However, despite their best efforts, there are no safe areas on the busy road immediately outside the school. This is a major safety hazard.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school has improved significantly over the last three years and is well positioned to improve further. Standards, in particular, at the end of Year 2, have improved from below the national average to significantly above. The senior leadership team has a clear vision for further development and has improved its self-evaluation procedures. It now has very good data analysis systems in place that help the school to identify what needs to be improved further. The school's development plan is sound but does not provide the same kind of rigour to the process of improvement. The school has already planned to improve this. The governing body is very supportive and has made a good contribution to school improvement. It has become more active in its monitoring and evaluation role. The school's resources have improved significantly since the last inspection, especially in terms of the accommodation it provides. Good use of the inside space is made and there have been excellent improvements in the outside facilities, especially for the Foundation Stage. The school still does not have its own hall but very good use is made of the village hall and the W.I. hall.

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

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?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Misterton C of E First School, Misterton TA18 8LZ

Thank you for the way you greeted us when we inspected your school. It was a delight to see so many happy faces during lessons and at playtimes. We think that the way you support and help each other and your attitudes to learning are excellent. These things contribute much to making the school good.

You make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from the time you enter Reception to the time you leave in Year 4. You also show that you very much enjoy the good teaching and the activities the teachers prepare for you. We think that the school is doing well and could do even better if you improved your sentence work, the way you understand what you read in books and the way you solve problems in mathematics. The school provides you with excellent things to do in lessons and it was great to see so many of you doing well learning new sounds and speaking in French. All staff and governors help to ensure the school provides excellent care, support and guidance so that you improve your work and make excellent progress in your personal development.

The headteacher is doing a good job to improve the school for you and she is extremely well supported by the rest of the staff and governors. The school has worked hard to improve the buildings and the play areas outside. It is also doing some very good work so that the teachers know exactly what it is that you are doing well and what you need to do to improve. The school now needs to revise its development plan, which you could help with by giving your own thoughts on what needs to be improved next. This will help ensure the school continues to make good progress.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Greenhalgh Lead inspector

7 December 2007

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