

# Huish Episcopi Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123648
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	320526
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Brenda Cusdin HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<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	161
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Samantha Coker
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gillian Islip
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 May 2006
<b>School address</b>	North Street Langport TA10 9RW
<b>Telephone number</b>	01458 250673
<b>Fax number</b>	01458 251587

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Most children start in the Foundation Stage with skills at expected levels for their age. A few pupils learn English as an additional language. Very few come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The social and economic circumstances of the children's families vary widely.

A new Children's Centre is being built on the school site. The Foundation Stage class moved base a few weeks before the inspection. Their new outside play area is planned to be operational by the summer term 2008. There was a high rate of staff absence in the 2006–07 school year, particularly in the summer term.

When Huish Episcopi Primary School was inspected in May 2006, it was judged to require special measures. Leadership and management were inadequate because the causes of the pupils' underachievement had not been identified and had not been tackled. An interim headteacher led the school between November 2006 and May 2007. Then the deputy headteacher acted as headteacher until the new permanent headteacher took up post in September 2007.

## 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's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and the capacity to improve further is good. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. The leadership and management of Huish Episcopi Primary School are good. There is a very thorough approach to assessing the pupils' standards of work and tracking their progress. Senior leaders have identified underachievement and planned carefully what to do about it. The staff want the very best for their pupils. They have worked extremely hard to plug gaps in the pupils' learning and to improve teaching methods. This impressive team working has helped the school to achieve substantial improvements.

Senior leaders have an astute grasp of the strengths within the school and areas requiring further development. The Year 6 pupils caught up really well in 2007 and reached national standards in English and mathematics, and exceeded national standards in science. Pupils in some other year groups also caught up really well but staff absences affected the school's capacity to accelerate learning as effectively over all the year groups.

The inconsistencies from last year have been ironed out. There is more consistent teaching of reading strategies this year. There are whole school campaigns to promote the enjoyment of reading and writing, and to help pupils know their multiplication tables inside out. Standards are continuing to improve and pupils are achieving satisfactorily.

Pupils are developing good personal skills. They make effective contributions to their own school and the local community. The school council, play leaders and reading buddies all do great jobs and everyone takes turns to lead the healthy 'Wake and Shake' sessions. Generally, pupils enjoy learning and their behaviour is good. Older pupils respond especially well to challenging tasks and good teaching. They are keen to have a go and share their ideas.

The curriculum has good points, such as the special events and the range of after school clubs. It covers the required programmes of study but senior leaders, rightly, recognise that opportunities to develop and use key skills, such as literacy and numeracy, are not joined up well enough to ensure that pupils consistently consolidate these skills in all subjects.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. There is some good practice, but it is still variable. Teachers introduce ideas thoroughly and this helps pupils to learn securely. Whole class teaching sessions are sometimes lengthy with less time than planned for independent work or small group learning. Occasionally in these lessons, pupils become restless and do not learn as much as they could. Marking celebrates what pupils have achieved. In most classes, but not all, marking helps pupils to improve their work.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children make satisfactory progress overall in the Foundation Stage and reach average standards by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with good features. Children are making good progress with early reading and writing skills because these are taught particularly well. Other strengths in teaching are the use of praise to raise children's self-esteem and the development of personal, social and emotional skills. Children have settled into their new base reasonably quickly and they are happy in school.

The teacher has recently revised planning so that it more successfully links the areas of learning in the curriculum for this age group and provides better opportunities for adult led, and child led, activities. Clearly defined learning zones in the new base, for example the creative corner, also promote independent learning. Best use is made of the limited outdoor space available currently. The plans for future outdoor provision are exciting.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good, particularly by reviewing the balance of time allocated to whole class teaching, learning in smaller groups and individual tasks.
- Ensure there is a consistent approach to developing key skills across the curriculum.

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.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

In 2007, Year 6 pupils achieved well during the year in meeting the challenging targets set for them, and hit national standards in English and mathematics, and topped them in science. Year 2 pupils made very good progress in closing the gaps in their learning during the year, although standards in reading and writing in the end of year tests were still below average. Some year groups did not catch up as much. However, across the school, far more pupils are now working at the right standards for their age in English and mathematics than was the case last year.

Targeting specific English and mathematical skills in class teaching has made a big difference and extra tuition has boosted the learning of underachieving groups. Catch up campaigns in reading and mathematics are helping everyone to consolidate their skills. Much better teaching means that pupils in the younger classes are making good progress in linking sounds to letters and recognising important words. The school has tackled underachievement robustly and pupils are now making satisfactory overall progress during their time in the school.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The good attitudes of pupils to school life play an important part in the welcoming ethos that greets parents and visitors. Pupils take responsibility cheerfully. At the school council meeting, pupils of all ages made very sensible suggestions for ways to improve the library and make reading more enjoyable. Play leaders and reading buddies are proud of helping other children. Many pupils join the various clubs. The choir performs regularly and gave a moving performance at Wells Cathedral. Attendance is above average.

Pupils show respect for each other and know the right ways to behave. During a stimulating session in the Life Bus, Year 6 pupils thought with considerable maturity about the danger of drugs and alcohol and how they could handle difficult situations. Whatever their age, pupils easily slip into paired discussions to share ideas and happily tell the whole class what they think. Year 6 pupils are particularly strong in these networking skills and, given that they achieve national standards by the time they leave, they are well prepared for the next phase.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Some practice is consistently good, but most is consistently satisfactory and a little is more variable. Teachers carefully plan the learning that should take place, and which particular groups need extra support or extra challenge. Lessons are prepared thoroughly. Sometimes, teachers' understandable desire to make sure that everything is covered and understood means that too much time is spent on whole class teaching at the expense of group and individual learning, and this holds back progress. The talents of the teaching assistants are used well to provide extra guidance and tuition where they are needed most.

In the best teaching, planning is very good and expectations of what pupils can achieve are consistently high. The main teaching skill that staff are working on currently is questioning. Teachers use questioning very effectively in some classrooms. Their questions make pupils think and the pupils' answers help staff know what they are thinking. Questioning is not as skilful where teaching is weaker.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

Staff have reviewed the curriculum they want to offer. Rightly, given the degree of previous underachievement, most thinking and effort has gone into improving provision for English and mathematics. New approaches are making a difference, but the development of key skills across the curriculum is not yet joined up well enough to ensure that pupils can apply these skills purposefully, appreciate why they are important, and take greater pleasure in using them.

The programme of interventions for pupils with learning difficulties and for those learning English as an additional language ensures that they progress and develop well. The development of social and emotional aspects of learning has strengthened.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The staff team are highly committed to encouraging pupils' achievement and their sense of belonging. Families are welcomed into the school. Teachers encourage parents to support their children, for example by reading with them and helping them learn their multiplication tables. There is very good practice now in identifying just how well pupils are progressing. Good assessment strategies and regular checks ensure that the school identifies any pupils at risk of underachieving. Careful support programmes are set up. Senior leaders ensure that they evaluate the impact of extra support or new initiatives, and this helps them to learn which approaches work best in which situations.

The school site throws up particular challenges. For example, there are steep flights of stairs between the main classrooms, and the playground and school hall. The pupils move safely around the site because staff supervise them carefully. The office staff ensure that routines run smoothly and everyone knows what they should be doing. Safeguarding procedures are sound.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The deputy headteacher and the interim headteacher led the school very well and helped its forward progress. The new headteacher is also providing good leadership. She is setting worthwhile goals, providing a clear direction, and phasing in new initiatives thoughtfully. The new management structure makes it very clear what responsibility holders should be doing. There are inbuilt checks in the management systems to ensure that planned actions happen and to see whether they result in the intended impact.

The leadership learning team have very useful management skills. The literacy leader, mathematics leader and coordinator for special educational needs have led developments in their areas skilfully. The administrator, who is part of the senior leadership team, makes a superb contribution to the smooth running of the school. Given the turbulence in staffing, finances are managed exceptionally well. Governors have become increasingly effective in their roles. They know the strengths and weaknesses in the school and ask for evidence that priority initiatives are working.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## 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?	3
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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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	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	2
The attendance of learners	2
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?	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

<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 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	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**

25 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Huish Episcopi Primary School, Langport TA10 9RW

Many thanks for our warm welcome. We loved meeting you and joining in your lessons and activities.

This was my fourth visit to the school. I visited regularly because inspectors in 2006 said that your school had to get much better and they were not sure whether this would happen. The improvements have happened and I was thrilled to see them.

Your staff are working very hard to improve the teaching of English and mathematics. They check carefully to see what you have learnt and plug any gaps that they find. Your parents help too, by reading with you at home and helping you learn your mathematical tables. You are learning satisfactorily now and your school is providing all of you with a satisfactory education.

Most teaching is satisfactory and there is some good teaching. Some lessons get you thinking hard. Sometimes, teachers are so keen to make sure you understand that whole class teaching goes on longer than they planned and a few of you find it difficult to concentrate all the time. Your teachers are thinking about how to make the best use of time.

Your headteacher would like to join up the curriculum better so that you have a clear reason to use the skills you are learning and see why they are so important in all subjects. We agree that this is a good idea and that she is right to plan ways to make teaching consistently good right across the school.

You are developing good personal skills. We saw that you take responsibilities cheerfully. You like discussing your ideas and you respect each other. These are all very important.

Your headteacher, staff and governors have the skills to make sure that things will keep on getting better, and they want the very best for you.

Very best wishes. Yours sincerely

Brenda Cusdin Her Majesty's Inspector

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Her Majesty's Inspector