

# Minehead First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123656
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	327954
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ian Hancock

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	283
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lynn Chuter
<b>Headteacher</b>	Brenda Coupe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	23 February 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Townsend Road Minehead TA24 5RG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01643 702938
<b>Fax number</b>	01643 704125

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<b>Age group</b>	4–9
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is much larger than average and serves the town and surrounding area of Minehead. Children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage during the academic year in which they are five. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with a small but growing proportion from minority ethnic groups. An increasing number of pupils with significant learning difficulties are coming to the school.

The school works closely with the independent large playgroup on site. The school has achieved the Active Schools Award, Artsmark Gold Award and Eco schools Bronze Award.

## 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 school. Parents are very positive about their children's school, with many complimentary comments such as 'I am extremely satisfied with all aspects of the school and the activities and opportunities created. All staff are friendly and approachable and always have the best interests of children at heart.' This is evidenced through strengths in pastoral care, moral and social development and working effectively with others. All this contributes strongly to pupils' good personal development and well-being. The outcomes are seen in happy pupils who behave well, feel safe and get on well together. They are keen to participate in exercise and have a good understanding of how to lead a healthy life. Good enrichment activities, as part of the satisfactory curriculum, stimulate pupils' interests and enjoyment of learning.

Pupils' academic achievement is satisfactory. Children enter school in the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills below those expected for children of a similar age. They settle quickly and make good progress, especially in their personal and social development, taking full advantage of the opportunities offered to them. As a result of new initiatives, including more emphasis on developing pupils' basic skills, standards are rising, particularly in reading, but they are below average in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 4. Pupils' achievement through the school is beginning to improve. This is a result of more focused support, such as intervention programmes and the introduction of individual targets to improve pupils' skills and confidence. Expectations of higher attaining pupils are still not high enough to ensure that they make the best progress.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory but variable, with the result that pupils' progress is inconsistent from class to class. Although there is much good teaching, lessons do not always sufficiently motivate or challenge all pupils. Assessment systems have significantly improved since the last inspection. However, information is not always used consistently by teachers when planning work or tracking individual progress, so that many pupils, particularly higher attainers, are not reaching the highest standards possible in writing and mathematics. The headteacher provides a clear direction for leadership and management. The role of senior leaders, including literacy and numeracy co-ordinators, has appropriately been identified as a key area for further development, so that they are more proactively involved in self-assessment and school improvement. Nevertheless, with the improved involvement of senior staff and governors and the continued success of recent actions, the school can demonstrate it is in a satisfactory position to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children's skills when they start school are below those expected for their age. In particular, many children have weak language, personal and social skills, and lack confidence. Very good induction arrangements, with very effective links with the playgroup, help children to settle well, learn routines quickly and grow in confidence. The welfare of children is paramount. High priority is given to the development of children's personal, social and emotional needs by the patient approach of staff, so that children feel safe and well looked after. Good leadership and teaching, with an interesting range of well-planned activities, ensure that children make good progress. Staff plan a good balance of activities between those that are led by adults and those the children choose. However, the outside area, although used well, is unattractive and has restricted space to enrich learning. The school is looking forward to this area being developed

in the summer. Groups of children are supported well by teaching assistants, who take an active part in children's learning and help teachers to carefully monitor their progress. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, many children reach the expected standards but often a high proportion are below these levels when they start Year 1.

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

- Raise standards and achievement in writing and mathematics by ensuring teachers carefully track individual progress and provide appropriate activities, particularly for higher attaining pupils, so they reach their full potential.
- Improve the consistency of teaching and learning and teachers' expectations so that pupils make good progress in every lesson.
- Make sure senior leaders play a full part in monitoring the school's performance to bring about improvement.

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**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, but there are variations in how well pupils progress between different classes. Some work is not sufficiently well matched to pupils' needs, so pupils, particularly higher attainers, do not always achieve as well as they should. Children often make good progress in reading and standards in this subject are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. However, standards are below average in writing and mathematics. Strategies such as small group support, the introduction of individual targets and higher emphasis on developing basic skills are beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards and achievement but this is an area for further development. Pupils with learning difficulties, including those with very severe disabilities, make similar progress to their classmates. They have a significant level of support, their needs are clearly identified and targets are appropriate to their particular difficulties.

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

### **Grade: 2**

The school is a happy and harmonious community. Relationships between pupils and adults are positive. Consequently, pupils feel valued and secure, and know that adults have their best interests at heart. Pupils' behaviour is good and they usually concentrate well on their tasks. Occasionally, their attention wanes because they have to listen to their teachers for too long and are not actively involved in their learning. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. In these circumstances, it is surprising that the attendance rate is only average. This is partly because some parents take their children on holiday during term time.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with particular strengths in moral and social development. Pupils work together amicably, respect the feelings of others and have a well-developed sense of fair play. They are keen fundraisers for charities. They respond positively when given responsibility, for example as members of the active school council or acting as buddies for younger children. The school has achieved the bronze Eco-Award, and pupils have a keen awareness of the need for energy conservation. Pupils are safety

conscious and are concerned for the welfare of others. They demonstrate a good understanding of healthy lifestyles and thoroughly enjoy a wide range of opportunities to exercise. Pupils' positive approach to learning and satisfactory academic achievement ensures they are soundly prepared for their future education.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Although there is good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching and learning, the quality is somewhat uneven through the school, with variations in how well pupils learn from class to class. All teachers use a variety of teaching styles and positive relationships contribute well to the good personal development. The purpose of the lesson is explained well so that pupils know what they are aiming to achieve. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards to support pupils' learning but sometimes activities are too teacher-led and pupils are not actively involved in their own learning. The key variability in teaching is that lessons do not consistently meet the needs of everyone, particularly higher attaining pupils, so that work is not well matched to what all pupils know and understand. When this happens, the pace is slow and expectations too low, which has a negative impact on achievement. Teaching assistants generally give good support when working with groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties, to increase their confidence and self-esteem. Although there is evidence of good marking, which helps pupils know how to improve their work, advice of this kind is not yet routine.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

Learning is extended well through a good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils speak enthusiastically about recent trips, including their residential experiences at Charterhouse, visits to local places of interest, swimming opportunities and numerous activities to promote the arts. These all have a positive effect on pupils' interest and enjoyment in school and strengthen links with the local community. The additional provision for developing basic skills is beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards, particularly in reading. However, the raising of standards and achievement in writing and mathematics remain development priorities for the school and more time is planned for these subjects. There is a strong emphasis throughout the school on developing pupils' personal and social skills, which helps ensure pupils work hard and have positive attitudes in most lessons.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school's caring ethos effectively ensures all pupils are well cared for. Staff know the children well and pupils feel comfortable about sharing any concerns with adults. Parents are justifiably confident that children are well looked after at school. 'The teachers are kind and do all they can to make sure your child is happy', commented one parent. Pupils with specific social, emotional or educational needs receive sensitive support, with external agencies consulted where necessary. Child protection, health, safety and safeguarding procedures are all fully in place.

Provision for academic support of pupils is not as robust as the provision for their pastoral care. Improvements to assessment since the last inspection have ensured that there is accurate

information about pupils' attainment from the time they enter school. However, assessment information is not used consistently. As a result, work is not always matched well enough to individual needs to enable them to do their best. Learning targets have been introduced in literacy and numeracy but are in the early stages of development, and pupils have little idea of how to improve their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher, governors and staff are strongly committed to school improvement. The headteacher works hard and provides a clear direction for this happy and caring school and is appreciated by the vast majority of parents. She is well supported by the recently formed senior leadership team. They are aware that standards and achievement are not good enough and have begun to reconsider the school's self-evaluation procedures to identify key areas for improvement. Plans to develop the role of senior leaders, including literacy and numeracy co-ordinators, are well founded to bring about improvement in provision. Currently, the monitoring of teaching and learning is not rigorous enough to pinpoint precisely what improvements are to be made. This has an adverse effect on the consistency of teaching and learning throughout the school. Assessment procedures, including new systems for tracking pupils' progress, have significantly improved since the last inspection to identify those not making sufficient progress. However, information is not used consistently to match work to individual needs in order to improve their standards and achievements, particularly for higher attaining pupils. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Although the school has established some effective links with the local area, it has plans to develop more contacts beyond the local community. Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They are supportive of the school and have a satisfactory understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and are becoming more involved in monitoring its progress by attending regular training.

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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?	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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	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/or disabilities make progress	3

<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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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	3

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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?	3

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	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

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

8 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Minehead First School, Minehead TA24 5RG.

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you very much and thought you were friendly and polite.

The school provides you with a satisfactory education and these are some of the good things we found:

- Children in the Reception classes achieve well.
- You enjoy school, behave well and look after each other.
- You have a good understanding of how important it is to eat healthy food and enjoy taking regular exercise.
- You like the clubs you attend and visits outside school, including the residential trip to Charterhouse.
- Teachers and staff look after you well.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are working hard to make your school better.

These are the things we have asked your school to do to make it even better:

- We have asked staff to help you improve your work in writing and mathematics by giving you appropriate work to ensure that you make good progress, particularly those capable of doing harder work.
- We have asked that you teachers plan your work more carefully and raise expectations so that children in all classes can learn more quickly.
- We have asked that senior teachers, including those in charge of literacy and numeracy, become more involved in checking how well you are doing to help your school get even better.

You can help by continuing to behave well, working hard and listening carefully to your teachers.

Yours faithfully

Ian Hancock

Lead inspector