

# East Huntspill School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	123685
<b>Local Authority</b>	Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	327966
<b>Inspection date</b>	4 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Huard

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>	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 (total)	54
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>	Alan Kelsall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Duncan Cruickshanks
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 March 2007
<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>	New Road East Huntspill Highbridge TA9 3PT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01278 782453
<b>Fax number</b>	01278 792523

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a small school and almost all the pupils attending are from the village. Most pupils are from White English backgrounds and none is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average. The school is in the process of federating with West Huntspill Primary School and the two schools have already established a common governing body. Pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage are accommodated in a combined Reception and Year 1 class. There is a 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

East Huntspill is a good school. It has sustained and built on the improvements identified at its previous inspection two years ago. In the intervening time, there have been several changes of staff and there is now a secure and confident team headed by an outstanding headteacher. The focus on improving the school's provision has been successful and standards have risen so that they are now above average and pupils achieve well. Parents are supportive of the school. As one wrote, 'The school is well run, the children are very polite and the teachers are doing a wonderful job.'

The pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their above average attendance. The care and support they receive are outstanding, and as a result their personal development is good and they feel happy and secure. They are adamant that there is no bullying, although they admit that pupils do sometimes fall out with each other. The academic guidance provided is good. Clear, helpful marking and individual targets ensure that pupils usually know exactly what they have to do to improve.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make outstanding progress from low starting points, particularly in their acquisition of communication, language and literacy skills. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school. Great improvements have been made in mathematics, and the school's drive to improve writing is proving to be extremely successful. However, although the content of pupils' writing is imaginative, spelling is not as good as it should be.

Pupils learn effectively because the teaching is invariably at least good, and sometimes outstanding. Pupils were full of praise for their teachers and said things such as, 'they are helpful,' 'they make lessons fun,' and 'they make sure that we understand the work we have to do.' The teachers have high expectations of the pupils, in terms of both their behaviour and the quality of work expected. They use questioning skills very well to extend pupils' thinking as well as assessing how well they are learning. Work is marked regularly and systematically and pupils appreciate the fact that teachers talk through their work with them individually. The curriculum is interesting and stimulating and is being appropriately aligned across the two schools. The school has ensured that there are many opportunities for writing across a range of subjects and this is helping pupils improve their skills. A wide range of visits and visitors and a good variety of activities out of lesson time all help to enhance pupils' learning. The school's self-evaluation is excellent and identifies precisely where improvements need to be made. The leadership team have focused on the most important issues of improving standards. The strategies adopted are proving to be extremely effective, and demonstrate a very good capacity for further improvement. The governors are fully involved in the strategic development of the school and are effective and supportive. They are working hard to ensure that the federation goes ahead efficiently. However, some parents do not feel well enough informed about the implications of the federation and consequently have reservations about it.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

The Early Years Foundation Stage provision is managed extremely well, and this ensures that children thrive in a lively and exciting learning environment. Children's progress is outstanding because planning caters so well for their individual needs. The focus on linking sounds and

letters is proving to be particularly effective in improving children's speech and communication skills. It is enabling children to tackle writing letters and words for themselves confidently. Because of the consistently good teaching and wide variety of interesting activities, they do well in all the areas of learning and enter Year 1 with broadly average standards. The children's personal development is excellent. They learn to share and take turns and are very sociable. They are developing independence through being able to choose what they want to do from a wide range of activities both inside and outside the classroom. The excellent curriculum encourages very good use of the outdoor facilities. This provides very well for not only the physical development of the children but also their academic development, and includes chalks, sand and water play and a whole range of other exciting things to do. Assessment procedures are comprehensive, with the learning diaries containing evidence of detailed observations and constructive comment as well as photographs providing a highly useful record of the progress children make.

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

- Concentrate on the development of pupils' spelling skills in order to raise the standard of writing still further.
- Ensure that parents are kept fully informed and as involved as possible during the process of federation with West Huntspill School.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 2**

The attainment of children entering the Early Years Foundation Stage has fallen over the last two years and is now well below the levels expected nationally. Outstanding progress ensures they are prepared very well for entry to Year 1. Good progress is maintained throughout the rest of the school so that by Year 6, pupils' standards are above the national average. This illustrates considerable improvement since the last inspection. The school has focused well on raising standards in mathematics and English, and the exciting writing seen during the inspection illustrates how successful the strategies adopted have been. However, whilst content is often inspiring and grammar and punctuation correct, poor spelling holds the pupils back from attaining even higher standards. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress, as a result of early identification of their needs and good support.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are lively, happy and considerate. Their behaviour around the school is exemplary. They have an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle, and thoroughly enjoy the 'wake and shake' physical activities at the start of the day, often using routines devised by pupils in Years 5 and 6. They are very well informed about staying safe. As well as appreciating the dangers of alcohol, drugs and smoking, visits to the coastguard and from the police give them an understanding of other day-to-day dangers. The pupils are reflective and thoughtful. They have a sound understanding of other faiths and cultures and an excellent understanding of right and wrong. The school's contribution to the wider community is strong and they eagerly talk about the child they sponsor in India as well as other fundraising activities. The school council and house captains all play an active role in the school and the children relish taking on these responsibilities. Children are well prepared for their future life because they are developing good academic and interpersonal skills.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Pupils learn effectively because relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. This means that the interaction between them is excellent. Pupils are confident to ask questions and are not afraid to make mistakes. They say they enjoy the challenges set because they know they will be given the means to meet them. Key features of good teaching are the high quality questioning, which helps to develop the pupils' language skills, and the very good use of the interactive whiteboards to make lessons more interesting and stimulating. Support staff provide invaluable help to pupils both in and out of class. Pupils make good progress because teachers have high expectations of what they can achieve, and make good use of assessment information to plan work that is challenging. However, more able pupils are not always moved on to more challenging work quickly enough and this slows their progress.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school is working well to align the curriculum between the two schools in order to better share expertise and resources. Good planning enables pupils to build well on previous learning. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise their skills in other subjects, although the use of mathematics is not always exploited as well as it could be, for example in geography. Strategies to improve writing have proved extremely effective and the visit from a poet to help pupils prepare for a competition has been of particular value. The comprehensive personal, social and health programme has a good impact on pupils' academic and social skills.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

The high quality of care ensures that pupils are happy, feel secure and are ready to learn. For example, the provision of an anti-bullying box, where pupils can post their concerns, is seen to be very helpful and just one example of the excellent attention paid to the welfare of the pupils. This makes a significant impact on their good personal development. Child protection, health and safeguarding procedures are robust and help ensure the well-being of the pupils. Pupils have realistic and relevant individual targets for improvement in English and mathematics and they know what they are and what they need to do to meet them. However, sometimes the targets set for pupils with learning difficulties are too broad.

## **Leadership and management**

#### **Grade: 2**

The experienced headteacher, who joined the school in September 2008, has ensured that there has been minimal disruption to the pupils' learning during the changes that have been made this year. Senior staff have developed very good skills and take important roles in running the school. They have led key improvements which have helped the school's good improvement." Good systems are in place for setting challenging targets for all pupils and their progress towards them is monitored rigorously. The monitoring of teaching and learning is undertaken systematically and appropriately highlights what might be improved as well as strengths. The

governors visit regularly, and challenge the school effectively. They promote community cohesion effectively. The school has established useful links on a national and global level. There are strong links with the local community, although some parents have anxieties about the federation process and do not feel sufficiently informed about how it might affect their children's education.





## 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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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 learners' needs?</b>	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

## 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	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

5 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of East Huntspill School, Highbridge TA9 3PT

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. You certainly seem to be very happy and it was good to hear how you enjoy your work and all the extra activities in which you are involved.

- We think your school gives you a good education. These are the things we liked best:
- Your behaviour is outstanding and you are really keen and enthusiastic about your learning.
- You are making good progress in your work.
- You take very seriously the importance of keeping safe at school, as well as eating healthily and taking plenty of physical exercise.
- Teachers make learning fun for you and mark your work well.
- You have an interesting and exciting curriculum and we think the school provides a good range of activities outside school time.
- You think that your teachers and staff take very good care of you while you are in school and we agree.
- Your headteacher and governors lead the school well and are very keen to make it even better.

We think that a few things could be even better:

- Your writing has really improved and is often exciting and imaginative. However, you need more help to develop your skills in spelling to make it even better. You can help here by really making an effort to learn your spelling.
- We have asked the governors to make sure that your parents have all the information they need about the federation with West Huntspill School.

I am glad you enjoy your school and hope you will continue to work hard.

Very best wishes

Mrs Christine Huard

Lead inspector