

Herons Moor Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133985
Local Authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	328792
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2009
Reporting inspector	David Collard

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.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	480
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
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Andrew Leighton-Price
Headteacher	Julie Fox
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Herons Moor at the Campus Highlands Lane Weston-Super-Mare BS24 7DX

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average school serving its local community. It shares 'The Campus' with a special school and a community centre. Most pupils are of White British heritage. While the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly similar to the national average, the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is below average. Some, but not all, children start in the Nursery as part of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The school now has its full capacity of pupils. Since opening in 2003 with approximately 50 pupils, numbers at the school have grown considerably and, even since the last inspection in 2006, numbers on roll have increased by 50%.

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. It is continuing to improve and among its strengths is the way that it has addressed the issues associated with the significant increase in numbers in all year groups. For example, of pupils presently in Year 6, a significant minority have previously attended three or four schools. As one member of staff remarked, 'In the last 18 months, we have begun to feel like a real school.' Good leadership and management, along with a shared commitment of staff to 'getting it right', have ensured that with a good curriculum, pupils make good academic and personal progress and enjoy the many and varied tasks that they are asked to do.

Pupils are proud to talk about what they have achieved at school. The outstanding pastoral support means that most behave well and, for the small proportions that are more challenging, there are good systems and procedures to support them. In lessons, pupils settle to independent work very quickly and readily share their ideas and help each other. In the playground, younger and older pupils mix well and in discussion, they say that should any boisterous play happen, this is dealt with effectively. Pupils from this school and from the adjoining special school enjoy each other's company and happily work alongside one another in joint events. These qualities were best summed up by one pupil who, when asked what he liked about the school answered, 'We are trusted!'

Children presently in the Nursery started school with skills broadly as might be expected for their age, although these although these vary from year to year. Through the good well-balanced provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make good progress and the majority of children in Reception are working at skills above those expected for their age. Pupils continue to achieve well throughout the rest of the school. Standards in national assessments for seven-year-olds showed a steady improvement for three years until last year, when they fell back. The school was quick to analyse the reasons. After strengthening the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2, standards have once again risen and are broadly average. For those presently in Year 6, standards are broadly average which, at first sight would suggest slower progress across Key Stage 2. However, closer investigation reveals that, since over half the cohort joined the school during Years 3 to 6, many have improved at more than the expected rate. In Years 3 to 5, where there is much more stability, standards are increasingly higher, with evidence in reading, writing and mathematics of a higher proportion working above the age-expected levels.

The school's leaders have developed an accurate and realistic self-evaluation that balances both strengths and weaknesses. This has been at the heart of improvements. For instance, rigorous monitoring has successfully reduced variability in teaching, which overall is good. While there is still some unevenness, particularly in creating opportunities for pupils to think for themselves, all lessons are at least satisfactory and the majority are good. The school is rightly working on increasing this proportion so that all pupils, particularly those capable of achieving at higher levels, make even better progress. The excellent governing body bring very good expertise and, through highly extensive monitoring and evaluation, hold the school fully accountable for all its decisions.

The rapid growth of the school, along with the unique way it has combined many community facilities, has been a challenge that is being successfully addressed. The school is aware that there is still more it can do. For example, while most parents are supportive of the school, this is not universal. Leaders recognise the problem, and plans are underway to involve more parents

and carers in the everyday life of the school. This is aimed at understanding the perceptions that parents have and celebrating the school's successes. Nevertheless, the robust systems in place, resulting in good improvement since the last inspection, along with the good progress that pupils make, demonstrate that the school has an effective capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effective provision meets the needs of children well. Through both the Nursery and Reception, each child is recognised as a unique individual so most achieve well and some significantly so. Assessment information shows that children have made particularly good progress in the last two years. This has been focused on making sure that children take an increasingly active role in their play. For example, in 'the office', a child sounded out letters of a name and another took notes on a pad with great confidence. This all provides meaningful learning through real-life situations. Good use is made of both the indoor and outdoor learning environments which seamlessly become one classroom, providing opportunities for all areas of learning. Children with learning difficulties are well supported. The good welfare provision for the children ensures their personal development is equally good. Almost all feel safe in the secure environment, although a few children had difficulty playing with the older children when they started in Reception. This is something that is being evaluated by the school to see if systems need changing. Strong leadership ensures a clear direction, good teaching and a drive for improvement. Parents are encouraged to participate in activities, although not all say they are fully aware of what their children are learning. Plans are underway to enhance these opportunities further to ensure a better partnership in their children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of learning for all pupils, and especially for the more able, through more opportunities for independent and challenging work.
- Improve communication with parents to enable all of them to take a positive and active role in their children's learning

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well during their time at the school. Standards, while broadly average for pupils currently in Year 6, have been on a generally upward trend for three years. This is most evident for those who have been at the school the longest. School developments and new initiatives in reading, writing and mathematics have made a significant difference. For example, of the proportion gaining the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics in the 2008 national tests for Year 6, nearly three quarters were working below the age expected level when in Year 2. However, as is still the case, the school is targeting those capable of higher standards as some do not always attain their full potential. After a short period of decline, achievement in Years 1 and 2 is once again good. Good learning is evident in lessons and the analysis of longer-term progress from recent assessments demonstrates that these pupils are catching up quickly. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do equally well and some attain the expected levels for their age, but from lower starting points. Pupils are also making good progress in other subjects such as information and communication technology and music.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have an increasing involvement with, and respect for, groups different from themselves. They have very strong links locally, playing a regular part in the life of 'The Campus' and further afield. Good personal development in many lessons and the creative curriculum increases their celebration of their own and each other's achievements. Pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good, although spiritual awareness is not as strong, given the wide range of opportunities the school provides in this area. Pupils generally behave well and act very safely. Although there are some isolated incidences of misbehaviour, pupils recognise that the school's systems for managing behaviour do work, ensuring these do not impact on other's learning. Pupils' good contribution to the school and wider community is clearly evident. For example, older pupils assist younger ones and are very considerate of pupils with disabilities. Through the school council, pupils' views on bullying and antiracism were included in the school's policy documents. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the extremely wide range of after-school clubs. Their well-developed understanding of how to keep healthy results from the wide range of classroom, lunchtime and after-school provision. All this has resulted in the school gaining the Healthy Schools award. Attendance is broadly average, although much has been done to encourage better attendance and monitor non-attendance closely. One excellent example of this is a joint scheme with a local travel agent, which gives parents a discount for taking their holidays out of term time. Nearly a fifth of families have taken up the opportunity.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching is the reason why pupils make the progress they do. Good planning, use of resources and opportunities to make learning have a real purpose are some of the common strengths. Teaching assistants are deployed well and have good levels of expertise because of the high levels of professional development they have completed. Teachers use good techniques to manage behaviour and successfully defuse any potential interruptions. Pupils are keen to say that they have strong relationships with staff and really enjoy their learning. The use of more practical and relevant work, along with many opportunities for discussion, is providing pupils with a good basis for their future education and life in general. On the few occasions when teaching is satisfactory rather than good, it is because work is not well matched to the pupils' abilities, and independent work, in particular, does not provide the higher levels of challenge for the more able.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The use of a more creative approach to curricular activities is providing pupils with an understanding about how they can apply skills they have learned in other subjects. This also links well to the personal, social and health education programme that has been developed. In conjunction with a wealth of coaches, specialists and visits, pupils have been able to use the specific subject skills they are gaining in a variety of situations and so develop more confidence in their understanding. The school aims to embed these principles throughout all classes and subjects, as it works well in most but not all. Pupils talked enthusiastically about projects they have been involved in, such as the splendid murals on the walls undertaken with an 'artist in

residence'. In another example, pupils worked with pupils from the special school to produce a well-received puppet show that linked writing, art, design and technology.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The excellent pastoral care and strong safeguarding arrangements have meant that, over time, staff have gained a good understanding of pupils' needs. New pupils have good induction systems to help them settle, including 'buddies' and initial assessments. Information for parents is increasingly extensive. The recent introduction of a family liaison worker has added to the support for parents, who are able to arrange appointments or send text messages should they need immediate help. However, a minority of parents have individual perceptions about the school which have not all been fully resolved. Nevertheless, the many positive features ensure that pupils, and particularly the most vulnerable, are carefully nurtured. Good academic assessment has been central to ensuring that the performance of pupils from diverse backgrounds has been carefully tracked. Whole-school assessments are regularly undertaken, and analysed by the senior and middle management team and governors. Action has then been put in place to address the deficiencies. Information from the assessments is not always used as well as it could be by individual teachers, although more rigorous checks are developing its consistency.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Strong senior leadership and management qualities allow the potential of other leaders' expertise to be developed and extended. Governance is outstanding, providing challenge and monitoring at all levels. Governors have a very clear understanding of the current position of the school, using regular presentations by both subject and senior leaders and by cross-referencing issues through their monitoring. It is this very rigorous approach that has overseen the many improvements since the last inspection. Priorities for improvement are accurate and followed through and their success carefully evaluated. School leaders focus strongly on staff's individual performance, and the use of this detailed knowledge has effectively raised the quality of provision and pupils' achievements. Links with the adjoining special school are a testament to this, and school leaders can demonstrate the positive impact these have had. The school leadership team has produced a strategy for community cohesion and there is clear impact on pupils' understanding of our diverse culture. The school is in the process of ensuring that although it is good, it is promoted even more effectively. The school has outstanding links with external partnerships and uses them effectively to enhance the lives and education of pupils. However, while the school has worked hard to develop the partnership with parents, this has not been fully successful with the whole parent body. Plans are being developed to include more joint working and opportunities for parents to share their concerns or problems.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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

¹Grade 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

How good are 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
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 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	1
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**

14 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Herons Moor Community Primary School, Weston-super-Mare BS24

Thank you for making us so welcome during our recent visit. We very much enjoyed seeing all that you were doing and joining you in your lessons. We were sorry not to have spent more time with those of you in Year 6 but hope that your SATs went well. We agree with what a number of you told us, that yours is a good school. As I promised some of you, I have included the main points of our report below.

- You said that you were pleased with the way that the school has developed and that you feel that things continue to improve. We agree. We could see that there have been many good improvements.
- We have said that you behave well and, on those few occasions when some pupils do misbehave, the adults deal with this well.
- We think you make good progress in your studies even though some of you have only been at the school for a short while. Older pupils must have seen many changes as the school has grown. We have said that these changes have been dealt with well.
- Your teachers know how to make your work interesting and fun. This was something that a number of you mentioned and we agree. You are given good opportunities to make links between different subjects through your projects and topics - and we could see how much you enjoy working with all the visitors.
- You are looked after well. The staff make sure that they check how well you are doing and help you and your families to get the best from your education.
- Your headteacher has done a lot to improve the school and, along with the rest of the staff and the governors, has many exciting plans for the future.

So that your school becomes one of the best, we have asked the staff to make sure that all lessons are as good as the best ones and, especially for those of you who can do harder work, to make sure that you have lots of challenges. We have also asked that your parents and carers are kept informed of all the great things you do. You can help with this by sharing your ideas and continuing to suggest ways in which things can be improved. Good luck for the future.

Yours faithfully

David Collard

Lead inspector