

Huish Episcopi Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123648
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	340388
Inspection dates	25–26 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Deborah Zachary

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	130
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Samantha Coker
Headteacher	Ms Gillian Islip
Date of previous school inspection	22 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The majority of the inspection time was spent looking at learning. Eleven lessons or part lessons were observed, taught by six different teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, governors, staff and the headteacher. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including 39 questionnaires from parents and carers (completed online and on paper), the school's records of pupils' attainment and progress, school policies including safeguarding documentation, the school development plan, and online questionnaires from pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the impact of actions taken by the school's leaders and managers to raise the quality of teaching and learning
- the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and lower-attainers in Key Stage 2
- how well provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage meets children's needs.

Information about the school

Huish Episcopi is smaller than the average primary school, and is smaller than at the time of the last inspection. The vast majority of pupils live close to the school. Almost all pupils are White, and most are of British backgrounds. Around 10% of pupils are from other White backgrounds, and speak English as an additional language. A broadly average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, covering a wide range of needs. There are more boys than girls in the school: about 61% are boys. Most classes contain two year groups, including the class for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which contains a small number of Year 1 pupils.

Since the last inspection, the school has achieved the Healthy Schools, Activemark and FMSIS (financial management) awards. There have also been significant staff changes affecting most classes in the school.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Huish Episcopi is a satisfactory school that is rapidly improving because of the outstanding drive of the headteacher that unites the staff. The leadership and management of teaching and learning are exceptional. As a result, despite many staff changes, teaching is good and is still improving. Pupils are learning well in the classroom, but they have catching up to do and as a result, learning and progress are judged satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support for pupils are good, and safeguarding procedures are excellent. The curriculum is imaginative and exciting, and supports pupils' personal development very well. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and pupils keep themselves healthy and safe. They are well aware of what they need to do to improve their work because teachers involve them very well in their learning. Teachers plan very carefully to make sure what they are teaching meets the needs of the wide range of abilities and ages in the classes. In many lessons, the teachers also change the thrust of the lesson skilfully in response to needs that become evident during the session, but this is less secure in some classes.

The senior leaders' evaluation of teaching is highly perceptive, and a wide range of strategies are used to give the school a good understanding of how it needs to improve. This has led to significant improvements to teaching and the curriculum since the last inspection two years ago, and the capacity to improve further is good. Tracking of pupils' attainment is meticulous, but the analysis of attainment data to evaluate progress does not have quite the depth of other aspects of self-evaluation. For example, though there is plenty of information about progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, it is not pulled together into a coherent overview. This means development planning about progress is not quite as finely targeted as that for teaching. Relationships within the school are excellent, and the partnership with most parents and carers is strong. Comments made on their questionnaires were largely very positive and one, for example, wrote of the 'huge improvement in standards, communication and teaching'. A small minority of parents who responded to the questionnaire had reservations about communication, especially about progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Develop more consistent strength in the way teaching is tailored to the needs of individuals and groups throughout each lesson, by ensuring that teachers check pupils' engagement, probe their understanding and then adapt tasks as necessary.
- Fine-tune the analysis of pupils' progress, including that of pupils with special

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educational needs and/or disabilities, so it can better inform development planning.

- Improve communication with parents, especially the way they are informed about pupils' progress.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

The school's data about attainment indicate that pupils' progress is not yet consistently good ' it has been too patchy as pupils have moved through different year groups. It shows, however, periods of extremely rapid progress in Key Stage 1 and the last year of Key Stage 2. Attainment is average by the time pupils leave the school and achievement satisfactory. Boys and girls make similar progress, despite quite uneven numbers in some year groups. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers. Pupils who speak English as an additional language acquire English quickly and make good progress because of particularly good support, which is often tailored closely to their individual needs when they first arrive.

Pupils enjoy their lessons; they learn quickly because they are interested and the planned work meets their needs well. They remember particular topics and lessons with excitement ' one exclaimed, 'That was so fun!' when recalling some work with computers. Though standards in English and mathematics are average, pupils have good information and communication technology skills that they use across a wide range of subjects and applications. Throughout the school, they are good at working with a partner to explore ideas, and they take excellent responsibility for learning: by Year 6, they spontaneously ask the teacher questions about the content of the lesson during whole-class sessions. They concentrate well and are reflective, for example about similarities and differences between their own lives and the lives of pupils in the link school in Uganda.

The school's Activemark and Healthy Schools awards reflect pupils' good understanding of how to stay healthy. They are also perceptive about their own safety and that of others, and almost all feel safe, though a very small number of responses to pupil and parent questionnaires suggested that some do not. They look after each other, and also support each other's learning; for example, Year 6 pupils hear younger ones read at lunchtime. The school council is very active. Pupils are also very conscious of the wider community. Some worked with the police to combat vandalism, and they develop an understanding of local business, for example through links with the local supermarket. Year 6 pupils are very interested in, and aware of, what secondary school is going to be like; during the inspection they were working with a teacher from the local secondary school to look ahead.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school leaders make expectations of teaching very clear, and this has helped minimise the impact of the changes of teachers. As a result, there is very good consistency of planning, use of targets and sharing of lesson objectives with pupils. Marking is good. Strategies to involve pupils and modern technology are also used consistently well. Teaching assistants are well briefed and take an active part in teaching. Where teaching is less consistently good, it is to do with the skills of reacting to events during the lesson, for example asking probing questions to double check pupils' understanding or engagement, and then using pupils' answers to alter the direction of planned work whilst the lesson continues. The curriculum has been substantially reviewed since the last inspection and new strategies such as the use of symbols to help young pupils organise their ideas in their writing are having a good impact. Progress in literacy is outstanding in Key Stage 1. Themed weeks and visits from outside groups make the curriculum exciting by adding good variety. Planning ensures that the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes are fully met.

The atmosphere in the school is warm and welcoming and this encourages vulnerable pupils to feel secure. Individuals speak with great feeling about how the school has helped them overcome barriers and improve. Pupils are confident that they will get good advice. Detailed plans identify the strategies that will be adopted both for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language. The strategies for the former include physiotherapy and speech therapy where needed, and links with outside expertise are effective.

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These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy headteacher inspire staff with a very strong sense of purpose. There is very high morale and a strong commitment to consistent practice. Improvements to teaching and learning are driven forward by rigorous and frequent evaluation coupled with highly focused training, coaching and support. New staff are extremely pleased with the help they have received. Staff questionnaires are 100% positive. A wide range of monitoring activities means that planning is founded on robust evidence, and plans are clear and systematic. Monitoring and support ensure that learning in the classroom is good for all groups of pupils. Targets are challenging for all groups. Although analysis of progress is not as sharp as evaluation of learning in the classroom, the school also monitors equal opportunities through, for example, checking the take-up of after-school activities. It can demonstrate good participation by vulnerable groups.

The school has audited the nature of its pupils and its provision for community cohesion. It has identified that pupils have only limited opportunities to learn about the wide range of cultures in Britain. As a result, links have been set up with a school in London, but these have yet to have a full impact on pupils' understanding of cultural and regional variations and similarities. The school itself is highly cohesive and it reflects the immediate community well. Pupils are also gaining a satisfactory understanding of some communities in the wider world.

Governors provide a good balance of challenge and support for the school. They ensure that statutory responsibilities are met and set a clear strategic direction. Governors have all been trained in safeguarding responsibilities. New staff receive a comprehensive safeguarding induction, and all staff demonstrate a highly diligent approach to safeguarding practice. Risk assessments are thorough and pupils are highly aware of what might cause a hazard. They are confident that their views on safety are fully considered.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate	
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

As in other parts of the school, provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is improving. Children's progress is much better this year than last year, when there were staff changes and some children did not move on as much as would be expected. The teachers and teaching assistant(s) work together very well and the school monitors the provision very effectively. Planning for improvement targets the right areas, though success criteria sometimes focus on attainment rather than considering how well children have moved on in their learning. Safeguarding is exemplary, and care is sensitive. Curricular planning is detailed and ensures a good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities. However, the activities chosen by children tend to have to be indoors, because the outside area is out of sight of adults indoors. Nevertheless the outdoor area is used whenever it is practical to have an adult outside. Adults reinforce key skills well and there is good use of praise and plenty of laughter. Parents are involved well; for example, a notice at the gate suggests something they might talk to their children about that day. Routines have been established successfully and as a result the children take good responsibility. For example, two children took the initiative to very carefully sweep the floor next to the sand tray after they had spilt sand. Teachers assess children carefully and usually target work well to individual needs. Children who speak English as an additional language are fully involved and integrated.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

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Views of parents and carers

The large majority of questionnaires showed that parents and carers are satisfied with the school, and several commented on its improvement. In the small minority of questionnaires with concerns, most comments queried communication or the progress or provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This was a focus of the inspection, and inspectors judged that these pupils are well looked after and their progress is similar to other pupils. The school accepts that the questionnaire responses show it needs to communicate better with parents and carers, particularly about how well their children are doing and what the school is doing to support them. A very small number of parents and carers felt there were not enough after-school clubs. Inspectors judged there is a good range of extra-curricular clubs.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Huish Episcopi Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 39 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 130 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	46	17	44	3	8	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	56	13	33	2	5	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	9	24	20	53	4	11	4	11
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	32	19	50	3	8	3	8
The teaching is good at this school	16	42	15	39	1	3	5	13
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	37	16	42	2	5	5	13
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	47	11	29	1	3	6	16
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	8	21	20	51	2	5	5	13
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	32	15	39	3	8	6	16
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	32	17	46	1	3	5	14
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	7	18	19	50	6	16	4	11
The school is led and managed effectively	17	44	13	33	2	5	5	13
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	18	47	12	32	2	5	5	13

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Huish Episcopi Primary School, Langport TA10 9RW

Thank you for welcoming us when we visited the school this week. A particular thanks to those of you who gave us your views, either through the questionnaires or through talking to us. You told us many good things about the school, including how much you enjoy it. Some of the older ones remarked that the school has improved, and we think it has. You are taught well and are learning well in lessons, but some of you learnt more slowly in the past and have ground to make up. This is why we have judged the school to be satisfactory rather than good, even though many things are going really well.

You have lots of interesting work in lessons and enjoy some good clubs after school. You are also well looked after. We were impressed by the wide range of ways in which you help, both within school and in the community. For example, it was good to hear about the way some pupils worked with the police. Your headteacher leads the school really well. All the staff want to improve even more. These are the things we have said they should do:

- make sure all teachers check how well you are doing in lessons and change your tasks if necessary ' you can help in this by letting them know how well you are doing
- fine-tune the way they track your progress, so they can quickly spot anyone falling behind in their work and can plan exactly what to do to help
- improve communication with your parents and carers, because some said they don't always know how you are doing.

We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Deborah Zachary

Lead inspector

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