

INSPECTION REPORT

ST LAWRENCE'S C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Westbury-sub-Mendip
Wells

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123779

Headteacher: Mrs S Badman

Reporting inspector: Mr RWG Thelwell
20977

Dates of inspection: 26 – 28 June 2000

Inspection number: 189374
Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Controlled

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: St Lawrence's C of E Primary School
Westbury-sub-Mendip
Wells

Postcode: BA5 1HL

Telephone number: 01749 870437

Fax number: 01749 870418

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs C Thompson

Date of previous inspection: October 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Robin Thelwell	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Children under five; Science; Information technology; Design and technology; Physical education.	The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Gillian Hoggard	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupil's attitudes, values & personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
June Harrowell	<i>Team inspector</i>	Special educational needs; English; Art; Music.	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Jon Palethorpe	<i>Team inspector</i>	Equal opportunities; Mathematics; Geography; History; Religious education.	How well the school cultivates pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; The effectiveness of the school's assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic performance; The adequacy of staffing, accommodation & learning resources.

The inspection contractor was:

*Westminster Education Consultants
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD*

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	7
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	10
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	12
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Lawrence's C of E Primary School is set in the centre of Westbury-sub-Mendip, a village three miles west of Wells. Whilst pupils are drawn from a cross section of society, they come, in the main, from owner-occupied homes. With the exception of the headteacher, current teachers have all been appointed within the last three years.

At present, 81 pupils attend full time. Nearly all in the reception class have reached five years of age. There are three classes, with an average size of 27 pupils. Each class caters for pupils from more than one year group. Children join the school at the start of the school year in which they become five. The majority enter school having had pre-school education. Assessment on entry shows that whilst nearly all have attainment expected for their age, a third are judged to exceed this. The school has identified ten pupils as having special educational needs. This represents 12 per cent of those on roll, and is below the national average. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs under the terms of the Department for Education and Employment. Code of Practice. Five pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is 6 per cent of those attending school and is below average. All pupils have English as their first language. The school benefits from an established and active 'School Association' which gives valuable financial support.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St Lawrence's is a good school that serves its pupils and community well. It has no major weaknesses. Taking into account the attainment on entry, and the good added value in terms of pupils' achievements when they leave, St Lawrence's is an effective school. Teaching is good across the school, and good quality relationships and behaviour are the norm. The headteacher, staff and governors work well as a team, they have successfully addressed the issues from the last inspection, and have created an orderly climate for learning. The school makes efficient use of time, money, accommodation and resources. Although the unit cost per pupil is above average, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Provides a warm, caring community where pupils are known well and valued as individuals. It creates an orderly climate for learning;
- Promotes very good attitudes, behaviour and relationships;
- Good teaching is a strength of the school;
- At both key stages, pupils achieve high standards in English;
- Provision for pupils' personal development is very good;
- The school is well managed by the headteacher, supported by a well-informed and involved governing body.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- There are insufficient resources for children's outdoor play activities;
- At Key Stage 2, the use of information technology to monitor and display data relating to science investigations is underdeveloped;
- Neither the prospectus nor the governors' annual report to parents contains all the required information;
- The school has yet to produce a policy for the curricular provision of children in the early years;
- Parents have insufficient information regarding the school's policy for homework.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress in addressing the issues from the last inspection of October 1996. There has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching. All pupils are now set challenging tasks, carefully matched to their capabilities. Greater emphasis has been given to using and applying mathematics in Key Stage 2, and to the quality of writing and presentation of work. Pupils now have more opportunities to undertake individual research. In music, a focus on composing and appraising has led to an improvement in pupils' performance. Governors have undertaken a review of parent consultation procedures, in order to improve the information to parents on their children's progress. The school has worked with the local authority to improve accommodation, and resources have been improved where weaknesses were identified. Good procedures are now in place to monitor and assess pupils' attainment. The role of subject co-ordinators has developed, and the headteacher now monitors the quality of teaching.

STANDARDS

In view of the small number of pupils in Year 6 involved in the 1999 end of Key Stage 2 assessments, results cannot be relied on to give a secure or exact indicator of school performance, or year-to-year comparisons. However, results of those assessed were very high in English, being within the performance levels of the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. Standards were above average for science, and average for mathematics. When compared with those of similar schools¹, the results of this small group were well above average for English, average for science, but well below average for mathematics.

The results of a larger group of pupils in the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 assessments, showed that overall attainment in reading was at the level of the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. Standards in writing were well above average, and for mathematics, above average. When compared with those of similar schools, results for reading and writing were well above average, but below average for mathematics.

¹ Schools with up to and including 8 per cent free school meals.

For pupils currently in Year 2, inspection evidence confirms that attainment in English, mathematics and science is above that expected for their age. However, the very small number of pupils currently in Year 6, achieves standards in these subjects that are well above expectations for their age. Attainment in information technology and religious education are in line with expectations at the end of Key Stage 1, and above average by the end of Key Stage 2. In foundation subjects, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve the levels of performance expected of their age. However, across both key stages in art, and in design and technology, together with geography and history in Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress and attain levels above expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to prior attainment and targets set within their education plans.

Whilst nearly all children achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes² by the time they are five, half of them achieve the expected levels earlier. On entry to Key Stage 1, the majority have standards in reading, writing and mathematics above those expected for their age.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils show very good attitudes to learning. This has a positive effect on the progress they make.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Within lessons, the consistently very good behaviour allows maximum time to be spent on teaching and learning.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils, and amongst pupils and staff are very good. They contribute very well to pupils learning.
Attendance	Good. The overall rate of attendance is above average. The rate of unauthorised absence is below average. Pupils are keen to attend.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching was satisfactory in all lessons observed. Overall, it was good or better in 88 per cent of lessons, including 32 per cent where it was very good. The high standard of teaching has a positive effect on pupils' progress and achievement.

Teaching of children under five was judged to be very good in two-thirds of the lessons observed, the remainder being good. In Key Stage 1, teaching was good or better in 85 per

² QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Desirable Learning Outcomes for Children's Learning on Entering Compulsory Education'. These outcomes are a set of skill, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of five. There are six areas of learning: language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, physical development and personal and social development.

cent of lessons observed, including 23 per cent where it was very good. In Key Stage 2, teaching was good or better in 88 per cent of lessons, and in 25 per cent it was very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. The quality of teaching of literacy was good or better in all lessons, including 43 per cent of very good teaching. The teaching of numeracy was good overall. Teachers successfully meet the needs of pupils with different abilities, ranging from those with special educational needs, to higher-attaining pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Provision for children under five is good overall. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is broad and balanced. It is supported by a good range of out-of-class activities and educational visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is well managed by the special educational needs co-ordinator.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good and for their spiritual and cultural development it is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school's provision for child protection, together with health and safety aspects of care, is good. Very good provision is made for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development.
How well the school works in partnership with parents.	The school has an effective partnership with parent, which has a positive effect on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership. The good support she receives from staff and governors results in the school having a positive and caring ethos that supports and promotes pupils' learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Neither the prospectus nor the governors' annual report to parents contains all the required information. Governors have not ensured that children under five have the required resources for all aspects of outdoor play. In other respects, governors meet their obligations well. They have a clear understanding of the school's provision for the National Curriculum, and standards pupils achieve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good procedures are in place to monitor and evaluate performance. Data is analysed to help determine what is to be done next. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching on a regular basis.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes efficient use of its resources to support pupils' learning. At each stage of planning and evaluation, the governing body applies the principles of 'best value' to good effect.

The school has satisfactory staffing to meet the demands of the areas of learning for children under five and the National Curriculum. Accommodation is satisfactory. Whilst resources are satisfactory overall, strengths are noted in English, information technology and music. There is a weakness in elements of children's outdoor play provision.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching is good, and pupils make good progress; • The school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best; • Pupils enjoy coming to school; • The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible, and behaviour is good; • The school provides an interesting range of activities outside school. 	<p>A small number of parents indicated concerns about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount and regularity of homework; • Information about the progress their children make; • The way in which the school receives parents with concerns; • Management of the school.

Thirty-one parents returned the questionnaire, and 19 parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector. Inspection evidence confirms the positive views expressed by parents. The team is of the opinion that an appropriate amount of homework is provided for pupils, relative to their ages. However, it finds there is no common understanding among parents as to the school's policy on homework. The arrangements for reporting pupils' progress are satisfactory; there is an annual report and meetings for parents to discuss children's work with staff. Teachers are available to meet parents informally at the start and end of each day. Whilst a small number felt ill at ease when approaching the school with concerns, the large majority of parents feel that the school is very approachable and teachers welcoming and friendly. Contrary to the views of a small number of parents, the inspection team finds the school to be well managed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The assessment of children on entry to school, shows that whilst nearly all have attainment appropriate for their age, a third have levels above expectation. The school makes good provision for its young children. They make good progress in personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, and creative development. Progress is satisfactory in knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical development. Whilst nearly all achieve the officially recommended outcomes by the time they are five, half of them achieve the expected levels earlier. On entry to Key Stage 1, the majority has attainment in reading, writing and mathematics above that expected for their age.

2. Results of 1999 end of Key Stage 1 assessments for reading, showed the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level³, to be very high when compared with the national average. The proportion gaining the higher level was above average. Overall standards for reading were consistent with the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. In writing, all pupils achieved the expected level and the proportion reaching the higher level was well above average. For mathematics, the proportion gaining the expected level was very high, whilst that gaining the higher level was above average. Teacher assessment for science, showed the proportion reaching the expected level to be very high, and above average for those achieving the higher level.

3. When compared with similar schools, results were well above average for reading and writing, above average for science, and below average for mathematics.

4. In view of the small number of pupils within the Year 6 cohort, assessment results cannot be relied on to be a secure or exact indicator of school performance, or for making year-to-year comparisons. However, the results of those assessed at the end of Key Stage 2 were very high in English, being within the performance levels of the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. Standards were above average for science, and average for mathematics. When compared with similar schools, results were well above average for English, average for science, but well below average for mathematics.

5. Over the last four years, the results of Key Stage 1 assessments for reading, writing and mathematics have exceeded the national averages on each occasion. In Key Stage 2, the school's performance over recent years in English, mathematics and science, has been broadly in line with national trends. In order to raise standards in mathematics, the school undertook a detailed analysis of assessment results. As a consequence, work in Key Stage 1 focused on shape, space and measurement, and representing and interpreting data, whilst in Key Stage 2 there was more emphasis on place value and number work. Across both key stages, a greater emphasis was placed on mental arithmetic, as prescribed by the National Numeracy Strategy.

³ The national expectation is that, when assessed at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils should achieve Level 2. The higher level for pupils at Key Stage 1 is Level 3. At Key Stage 2, the expectation is that when assessed, pupils should achieve Level 4, with the higher level being Level 5.

6. Inspection evidence confirms that for the present group of seven year olds, attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average for English, mathematics and science. The very small number of pupils currently in Year 6 achieves standards in these subjects that are well above the expectations for their age.

7. In English, pupils make good progress in speaking and listening, and by the end of Year 2, achieve standards above those expected for their age. They show confidence in asking and answering questions, and are keen to read and speak aloud. By the time they leave the school, at the end of Year 6, standards are well above average. Pupils use a breadth of vocabulary when discussing items of interest, or explaining their views.

8. In reading, pupils make good progress as they move through the school. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average. Pupils read texts that are more demanding than usual for their age. At the end of Year 6, where standards are well above average, pupils read complex texts with expression and accuracy, discuss character and plot, and demonstrate well-developed library research skills.

9. Across both key stages, pupils make good progress in writing. Standards are above average at the end of both key stages. Pupils write for a range of purposes and audiences. They acquire good habits in learning spellings, and using dictionaries and thesauruses to support their writing. By the end of Year 6, pupils write with a fluent and clear cursive style, and work is presented well.

10. Pupils make effective use of their literacy skills in other subjects. In history, they research and produce interesting work on Tudor times and other historical periods. In geography, pupils produce informative work on Africa. In science and design technology, pupils write clear accounts of investigations, and write instructions and evaluations relating to items made.

11. In mathematics, pupils make good progress across each key stage. By the end of Year 2, pupils have good concepts of number. Work related to number is well above average by the end of Year 6. Mental arithmetic is developed well through regular 'mental agility' activities. Numeracy skills are used to good advantage in science investigations when measuring and recording findings. Pupils measure and weigh in design and food technology, and refer to time-lines in history.

12. In science, pupils make good progress at both key stages. Experimental and investigative science is a strong feature of the provision. Pupils have a broad knowledge of science, and are able to observe, experiment, speculate and use the skills of scientific enquiry. They understand what makes a test 'fair', and use an increasing range of scientific language with confidence.

13. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make sound progress in developing their skills of information and communication technology, and achieve the standards expected for their age. Good progress is made at Key Stage 2. This results in standards being above average at the end of Year 6. Pupils apply their information and communication technology, skills well in other subjects, particularly literacy and mathematics. However, the school is aware of the need to develop the use of information and communication technology, for monitoring science investigations in Key Stage 2.

14. In religious education, pupils make sound progress across Key Stage 1 and achieve standards in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Good progress is made throughout Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average. Pupils have a good knowledge of Christian beliefs, and of other world faiths.

15. Pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages in music and physical education, and at Key Stage 1 for geography and history. They achieve levels of performance in line with expectations for their age. In both art, and design and technology, pupils in both key stages, make good progress and achieve standards above the expectations for their age. Similar levels of performance are achieved in Key Stage 2 in geography and history.

16. All pupils on the school's register of special educational needs have individual education plans that clearly identify realistic, but challenging targets. Pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and to targets set in education plans. In all classes, higher-attaining pupils are provided with suitably challenging work and make good progress.

17. The school surpassed its targets for the small number of pupils in the 1999 assessments for English, and narrowly missed them for mathematics. The school is now working with the local authority to set targets to ensure that the next group of Year 6 pupils achieves its full potential in literacy and numeracy. The school has a positive attitude to the ongoing raising of standards, and the headteacher, staff and governors work together to this common end.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. Pupils are keen to come to school, and their behaviour is very good both in and out of lessons. Parents confirm that their children enjoy school.

19. Attitudes to work are very good; pupils show great enthusiasm and involvement in learning. For example, a Year 1 class in English showed great pride in their efforts when writing about a bicycle, in an upper years literacy class, pupils were involved and keen to respond to questions regarding the planets within the solar system, they clearly enjoyed the activity.

20. Pupils behave well in lessons; an early years literacy class looking at the poem Stone Soup was well behaved, they listened attentively to the teacher and to each other. They move around the school sensibly and treat it with respect - bowls of flowers and growing seeds in pots were left undisturbed all week. Pupils form constructive, polite relationships with each other and the teacher; this is a strength of the school. The same early years class had circle time⁴, on the theme of promoting self-esteem and group identity. During the lesson, children demonstrated very good relationships with each other. There is no evidence of harassment or threatening behaviour. All ages and both genders play happily together in the playground. Despite some parental concern, pupils themselves report no evidence of bullying. Pupils with special educational need are fully integrated into the life of the school.

⁴ In these lessons, pupils sit in a circle, and through agreed rules, have the opportunity to speak and listen to each other talking about issues that concern all of them.

21. Pupils reflect on what they are doing. For example, in the early years assembly, pupils considered ways in which they could make the world a better place. Pupils in a Year 2 science lesson, took time to think about their replies to questions about how light effects the growth of plants and seeds. They are particularly good at respecting one another, frequently applauding others' contributions or saying 'That's a good idea!'

22. They take responsibility willingly when offered. For instance, two Year 5 children conducted a class assembly on the theme of Florence Nightingale. Older children work as 'Playtime Friends' to help anyone who may be feeling lonely or left out. They use their initiative when searching for information - older pupils used books, the Internet and CD ROMs confidently to find information about plant growth. Younger pupils worked independently to make a boat that would float. Many pupils compete in local sports tournaments and events such as cricket and cross-country. Such confident, mature and independent attitudes, particularly demonstrated by the able group in Year 6, are a significant improvement from the last inspection.

23. Attendance is good at 94.3 per cent, and unauthorised absence low at 0.2 per cent. Pupils are punctual, and lessons start on time. There were no exclusions in the last school year.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

24. Good teaching is a strong feature of this school. Teaching is judged to be satisfactory or better in all lessons observed. It is good or better in 88 per cent, including 32 per cent of lessons where it was judged to be very good. This is a significant improvement on the last inspection when a quarter of the lessons observed were judged to be unsatisfactory. All teachers and support assistants work very well as a team, sharing good knowledge and expertise. The high quality of teaching has a positive effect on pupils' responses and the progress they make.

25. Teaching of the small number of children under five was judged to be very good in two-thirds of lessons observed, and good in the remainder. Planning is based on the officially recommended Desirable Learning Outcomes. It covers all areas of learning for children under five, and links very well with the early stages of the National Curriculum. Children are provided with a range of relevant and interesting experiences. The teacher's knowledge and understanding of this age group are reflected in the preparation and delivery of lessons, and in the careful and detailed monitoring of children's work. Staff co-operate in providing children with an appropriate balance between teacher-directed activities, and those they choose for themselves. The many opportunities created to develop and extend children's language ability are a marked feature of the good practice observed.

26. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 was judged to be good in 85 per cent of lessons observed, including 23 per cent of lessons which were very good. In Key Stage 2, 85 per cent of lessons were judged to be good, including 25 per cent which were very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed.

27. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of subjects taught. They use this expertise effectively. Teachers are enthusiastic, and this contributes to well managed classes. On many occasions, pupils' understanding is enhanced by teachers' clear explanations and effective demonstrations. In nearly all lessons, teachers communicate objectives clearly, ensuring that pupils fully understand what they are expected to achieve. At all times, teachers have suitably high expectations, and give good support and reassurance.

28. Across the school, classrooms are well organised to promote learning. Teachers were observed using an appropriate range and balance of teaching strategies, including individual, group and whole class teaching to good advantage. The use of questioning techniques by staff is very effective, and has a positive effect on the development of pupils' learning, particularly speaking and listening skills. The same is true of teachers' encouragement and expectation of pupils to use correct vocabulary within subjects. Good examples of both practices occur regularly at end of lessons, when pupils discuss what they have learnt. During circle time, teachers show sensitive care, control and guidance when they encourage pupils to contribute to a range of issues.

29. Teachers across the school make good use of time and resources available to advance pupils' learning. Lessons have clear objectives that build well on previous learning. Nearly all lessons start with a recap of what pupils have learnt earlier, and how this is to be developed within the session. A significant contribution to the effective teaching observed, came from the school's team of support assistants. They work in close partnership with teachers to enhance successfully pupils' learning. Teachers ensure all those working with them have a clear understanding of the objectives, methods and resources to be used. Pupils respond well to the support given. Staff have built good relationships with pupils, and behaviour is very good. Inspection evidence confirms that staff know pupils and their individual needs well, and that teachers plan for them accordingly.

30. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans relate well to the needs of pupils for whom they are written. Staff use these plans well to meet specific needs. Teachers give clear instructions, and use praise constructively. As a result of good support, pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and to targets set in education plans. In contrast to the findings of the last inspection, the school now provides well for its higher attaining pupils. In each class, such pupils are set suitably challenging tasks, well matched to their ability. A clear and helpful policy is in place to support staff in the identification and monitoring of more able pupils.

31. Teaching of the daily literacy hour was judged to be good in all lessons, including 43 per cent where it was very good. Sessions are well planned, with clear objectives. Interesting activities are provided for pupils, and good use is made of the review sessions at the end of lessons. The most successful lessons are characterised by the enthusiasm of teachers, expressive reading and leading of stories, and skilled questioning to ensure that pupils understand the texts. The quality of teaching for the daily mathematics lessons is good. Lessons are well planned, with a good range of activities to reinforce pupils' understanding of the concepts taught. In mental arithmetic sessions, pupils are challenged to think and use their recall of number with rapid responses. Pupils enjoy this and respond well.

32. Day-to-day planning is very effective. Teachers make good use of ongoing assessment to help them plan what is to be taught next. Clear policy documents, together with schemes of work for each subject, help teachers plan for the systematic development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. However, there is no policy to support the provision of children under five, to ensure that the good practice already taking place is maintained and developed. Teachers' marking of work is consistently good. In addition to providing positive comments to note their appreciation of pupils' efforts, teachers give clear guidance as to what pupils must do to improve. Although a number of parents had concerns regarding the provision of homework, inspectors find that teachers make appropriate use of homework throughout the school.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

33. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Appropriate emphasis is given to English, mathematics, science, information technology and religious education. The shortcomings in the previous report relating to music, and to the quality of the curriculum provision in the upper years of the school have been fully addressed. However, in information technology, the use of equipment to monitor and display data relating to science investigations is under developed.

34. There is a good programme of studies for children under five, which covers all the officially recommended areas of learning, and links very well with the requirements of the early stages of the National Curriculum. However, these children do not have regular access to wheeled vehicles and appropriate climbing equipment, as part of their outdoor physical development.

35. The curriculum provides a good framework for pupils' spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical and personal development. The weakness in provision for pupils' personal development, at the time of the previous report, has been addressed. Pupils are given many opportunities to work on their own initiative using reference material and computers. During the inspection, one pupil was so caught up by the class book being used in the Literacy Hour that, at home, she had written to the author. The letter was being forwarded to the author, with whom the school has had previous correspondence. The personal and social education programme takes full account of statutory requirements in relation to healthy living. The curriculum provides a good preparation for the next stage of pupils' education.

36. With the exception of a policy for children in the early years, the school now has policies and schemes of work in place for all areas of the curriculum. Curriculum planning for the long, medium and short term is good and is managed well. These plans ensure that new learning is based on previous knowledge and skills, and particular care is taken in the mixed age classes to ensure that work is not duplicated. A good feature of the planning is the way that all ability levels are provided with appropriate and challenging activities.

37. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum. The school successfully identifies and provides for pupils of higher attainment. Through its association with CASS (Collaboration Amongst Small Schools), more able pupils from nearby small schools together work for a

variety of subjects; this helps to raise further pupils' levels of attainment. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. This provision, supported by the effective special needs assistants, enables pupils to make good progress in relation to their individual education plans and prior attainment. The school has a clear special needs policy, which includes a section on pupils with high ability, and meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs. Documentation for these pupils is clear and well organised. Individual education plans provide detailed targets appropriate to the needs of each pupil, which are reviewed regularly. Annual reviews of pupils with statements of educational need are appropriately carried out. Parents are fully involved throughout the special needs process, from the time when concerns are first expressed through to annual reviews.

38. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of extra-curricular activities which include provision for sporting, musical, cultural, and drama events. The curriculum is further enhanced by a good range of visiting artists and musicians, and by visits to places including the Kilve Residential Centre which gives excellent opportunities for extended work in art, history, geography and science. The school provides very good links with the community, supporting local activities, singing in the Parish Church, and through entertaining the elderly. Pupils visit a nearby Hindu Temple, and make regular use of the local Leisure Centre and local playing field. Visitors and governors regularly come to the school, sharing a variety of skills, including first aid.

39. Parents are rightly pleased with the range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. In respect of their concerns related to homework, inspection findings are, that this aspect of the school's curriculum is satisfactory. The school has a homework policy, and the level of homework expected from the pupils is varied and increases as pupils move through the school. In the main, good use is made of the home/school link book, and an appropriate range of subjects are set, which includes work on mathematics, and personal, social and health education. Pupils regularly take home reading and library books, and have spellings to learn. This has a positive effect on standards. The school makes every effort to keep parents informed of the work undertaken in classes through the parent information boards attached to each classroom and through booklets, for example the one explaining the Literacy Hour, which was produced for parents. Despite this, a small number of parents are unhappy with the arrangements for homework.

40. Overall, the school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. In assemblies and class worship, pupils have opportunities to reflect on their lives and the different situations they may find themselves in. Pupils are quick to offer suggestions and opinions, as when the youngest pupils suggest that we should look after our pets properly, and not pick wild flowers. There are good examples of opportunities for spiritual development throughout the curriculum. For example, pupils are enthralled when they make observational drawings of sunflowers, and wonder how they could grow to be so beautiful and complicated. In science, they are amazed when paper clips actually jump up when attracted by a magnet. This is effectively linked in their worship when they consider the wonders of our world.

41. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. This results in pupils' behaviour being very good in and around the school. Teachers show good control and management in class, and a mutual respect is built up which fosters good attitudes and behaviour. The programme for personal, social and health education provides opportunities for pupils to discuss problems that arise; this has a positive impact in helping them to understand the difference between right and wrong.

42. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Nearly all lessons include an element where pupils need to work together and co-operate on a task. This they do admirably, sometimes in ability groups, and sometimes in age groups. Pupils take turns in helping with classroom tasks, and older pupils find it natural to help younger ones in and around the school. At playtime, nominated 'friends' seek out any children who appear to be on their own, to involve them in social activities. In class, pupils have a number of opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility for aspects of their own learning, for example when researching information. The school's extra curricular activities provide opportunities for pupils to meet together socially and appreciate the importance of teamwork. This is further developed through pupils working with others from nearby schools, where they share workshops on a variety of topics. The social development of pupils in Key Stage 2 is developed further by their annual residential visit.

43. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils gain an understanding of their own culture through literature, history, geography, religious education and science. Their studies take them around the locality and to museums, churches and farms. There is good provision for pupils to appreciate the diversity and richness of other cultures. In religious education, they consider other faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism. In topic work, they study countries in Africa, and this is supported through music and African rhythms. Pupils are encouraged to think of others, including those in 'Third World' countries, when they take part in raising money for charities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school is a warm and caring environment where staff have a close individual knowledge of their pupils as part of a family and of a community.

45. Day-to-day welfare arrangements are good. Sick or injured children are taken to the office for basic first aid or sent home if necessary, and all playground incidents are recorded appropriately. There is a list of those with medical conditions; the school has taken the trouble to inform all parents about one child who has a specific allergy. Supervision of the playground gate, a key issue in the last report, has now been improved by means of a staff duty rota and the local authority recognises its duty to improve the exit's layout. New building work has solved the difficulty of very young children having to go a long way to the toilets.

46. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory with clear guidelines and policies for staff. The good knowledge that teachers have of individual pupils results in any concerns being quickly noticed and acted upon.

47. Measures to promote attendance are good, and involve parents closely. It is a matter much emphasised in the home-school agreement and other information for parents. The school has started to ring home if children have not arrived or are not accounted for by 10 a.m.

48. Good behaviour is promoted in a variety of informal ways. It is clearly highlighted in the school's aims and values, and is regularly reinforced by teachers with the support of parents. Younger siblings are encouraged to come into the playground and classrooms before work starts and children new to the school receive a very comprehensive induction, so that they are comfortable when they formally enter classes for the first time.

49. Pupils are encouraged to listen to others, respect them and work collaboratively. A good example of this being when pupils sit and discuss issues in circle time. Teachers frequently use positive reinforcement and praise to achieve good behaviour, and they provide good role models themselves. A monthly achievement assembly celebrates and rewards positive behaviour such as children finishing their work on time, assisting younger class members or helping with the clearing up.

50. The provision for personal development is strong. Staff are guided by a thorough personal, social and health education (PSHE) policy and syllabus. Despite some parental concerns about favouritism shown to children, no evidence was found to support this during the inspection. The school actively promotes equality of opportunity, as when it brings in male figures, such as governors, to provide suitable role models for reading.

51. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress are very good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Here, very good records are kept, indicating how well the pupils have achieved and where they have problems. This is then used to set individual and class targets, which are regularly updated, and indicate how pupils might improve. Whilst the majority of assessments in other subjects are carried out informally, the 'family' atmosphere of the small school means that teachers know individual pupils very well. They are well aware of their needs and support them in a positive way. Teachers carry out assessments at particular points of a pupil's time in school, including a baseline profile on entry, statutory tests at ages seven and eleven, and optional tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. In addition, 'end of topic' tests are given at appropriate times throughout the year. Individual profiles of pupils' work in the core subjects are kept, and are organised well to show pupils' progress over time. Thorough, moderated portfolios of pupils' work in all subjects, indicate levels of attainment, and support staff in assessment procedures.

52. Information gained from assessments is used to set targets, and is effective in raising levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are identified and supported well, as are higher-attaining pupils. Assessments are used to guide teachers' planning to ensure that the set tasks are at the appropriate level. This works well in both long- and short-term planning. When, for example, in a mathematics lesson, pupils grasped the concept quicker than expected, instead of following on with the planned lesson the next day, adjustments were made to ensure that pupils were sufficiently challenged.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Parents' views of the school are largely positive. The overwhelming majority confirm their children like school and are making good progress. They feel the school promotes appropriate values and good behaviour and attendance. They are, though, concerned about homework. However, these views were not supported by inspection findings. A small number felt there are difficulties in communication with the school, and in the way the school is managed. Although the inspection findings do not support these views, it is clear that there has been a communication problem and the school must ensure it makes clear exactly what is required in terms of homework and parental support.

54. A good range of information is provided for parents. There is a well-produced and informative prospectus, though it lacks information on the school's aims and values and comparisons for national curriculum assessments. Since these both show the school in a positive light it would be sensible, as well as statutory to include them. The annual governors' report to parents is informative but lacks some statutory information. Parent notice boards outside each classroom and at the school gate provide useful day-to-day material. There are numerous letters to parents from the headteacher about events or trips, all including an acknowledgement/response slip at the bottom. The headteacher also responds individually to parents wanting information or help for their children. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved appropriately in their children's education plans. Chatty and informative regular newsletters show how closely the school is involved in the local community.

55. Annual reports to parents on pupils' progress are informative and detailed. They contain pupil targets to aim for, together with evidence of how far the child has progressed towards them. The school holds formal parents' evenings each year, and parents report that informal contact is possible at any time; teachers are welcoming and friendly. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, when a key issue was to improve parental consultation.

56. There are many links with parents and the local community. The home-school agreement was produced in consultation with parents and several parents are involved in running extra-curricular activities such as French or drama classes. Many parents also help with reading and particularly with sport; some helped decorate the school. The school has run open days on literacy and numeracy, and has produced a booklet on mathematics for parents to support pupils at home. Parents and home life are often included in school work. For example, in history, pupils working on a time line took it home to add on family events. A pupil in the early years class brought in a picture and story about her rabbit, with a promise to bring in the rabbit later. In her capacity as community correspondent, a recently retired support assistant ensured parents were kept fully up to date with events at school. Homework, despite the concerns of some parents, is used satisfactorily, and given even in personal, social and health education. An active school association raises funds on behalf of the school and runs a number of social events, such as the Millennium party, summer fairs and barbecues.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The previous report found that the headteacher gave strong and effective leadership. Inspection evidence confirms this has been maintained. She sets a clear direction for the school's development, based on her awareness of the needs of pupils. She receives good support from a hard working staff, who, along with an involved and supportive governing body, share a commitment to provide quality education. This results in the school having a clear set of aims, values and policies that are reflected in its day-to-day life. In line with their stated aims, staff and governors have established a very positive and caring ethos that supports and promotes pupils' learning.

58. Together with the governing body, the headteacher manages the school well. Day-to-day management and organisation are good. Roles and responsibilities are well defined, and staff have specific management responsibilities that support the school well.

59. Management of the curriculum is delegated to teaching staff, who take responsibility for co-ordinating a number of subjects or aspects of school life. The school has responded well to the recommendations of the last report to develop the role of co-ordinators. They are now fully involved in planning and resourcing, together with evaluating the standards that pupils achieve. Monitoring of teaching across the curriculum is now undertaken by the headteacher through a regular programme of classroom observations.

60. There is regular and productive communication between the headteacher and the chair of governors. Committees, covering a range of management areas, meet regularly. Governors are linked with specific classes. Through visiting, observing and working alongside pupils, collectively, they have a good knowledge of the school's provision for the National Curriculum and the standards pupils achieve.

61. The preparation of the school development plan is well managed, with governors and staff successfully involved. The resulting document is of excellent quality, very clear and well structured. It establishes relevant priorities, responsibilities and resource requirements. It clearly states the criteria that will be used to evaluate success. The provision of in-service training associated with the plan's targets, together with those resulting from agreed personal development, is well managed by the headteacher in her capacity as staff development co-ordinator.

62. Neither the school prospectus nor the governors' annual report to parents contains the national results of the end-of-key-stage National Curriculum assessments, against which St Lawrence's may be compared. The prospectus does not contain statements relating to the school's aims, ethos and values. With the exception of not ensuring the provision of large outdoor equipment for children under five to ride, climb and balance, the governing body meets its statutory obligations well. Requirements relating to daily acts of collective worship are to be inspected by representatives of the Diocesan Board of Education, later in the term.

63. The school complies with requirements relating to the Code of Practice for the identification of pupils having special educational needs, and ensures equality of access to the curriculum. The school has a helpful special needs policy that conforms with the

requirements of the Code of Practice, and informs the management of special educational needs provision. The provision for special educational needs is well managed by the co-ordinator. She liaises effectively with teachers and support staff, and assists in the writing of pupils' individual education plans.

64. There are sufficient appropriately qualified and experienced teachers to deliver the National Curriculum. Careful thought has gone into the appointment of part-time teachers to lead in the teaching of mathematics and music. All concerned work very effectively as a team to provide a good quality education. The staff handbook provides clear information for new or supply teachers. There is a good number of learning support assistants. These are very well qualified and are highly effective, making a strong impact on standards of attainment. There are appropriate job descriptions, and all understand their role.

65. The main buildings are old, but are clean and well kept. The accommodation has been recently improved to provide better facilities. These now include a room for the head teacher, a staffroom, and improved toilet facilities for pupils. Classrooms are attractive, and all available spaces are utilised well. The 'Meeting Place' is well used for a range of activities including assemblies, food technology, information technology and music. The school's limited accommodation for physical education is effectively overcome by use of a swimming pool and sports hall at the local Leisure Centre, and a local field for games. Good use is made of the school's small but attractive grounds for environmental work.

66. The under fives have a secure area in which to play, but the provision for their physical development is unsatisfactory in terms of ride-on and climbing equipment. Learning resources elsewhere are satisfactory, although storage and accessibility remain a problem. Resources for information technology have been improved since the last inspection, and pupils now have ready access to a good number of computers. The library is well organised and satisfactorily stocked. Many external resources are used to enrich the curriculum, such as visits in the locality and further afield, and borrowing artefacts for religious education, history and geography.

67. The standard of financial planning and management, together with that of financial control is very good. The last audit of the school's financial management systems, undertaken on behalf of the local authority, found them to be very good. It raised very few minor recommendations for improvement. Governors are closely involved in budgetary matters, and all expenditure is carefully targeted and used appropriately. In keeping with the school's good application of the principles of 'best value', all spending decisions are evaluated for cost-effectiveness in terms of their impact on the quality of education provided.

68. The school's unit cost per pupil is above average. However, when taking into account: attainment on entry and the good added value in terms of pupils' standards when they leave; the quality of the school as a community and the education it provides; the effective deployment of staff and use of resources; St Lawrence's gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. In the context of its many strengths, in order to improve the school further, the governors, headteacher and staff should now:

- Improve the provision of outdoor activities for children in the early years, by providing suitable ride-on and large play equipment;
(Paragraphs: 34, 62, 66, 75)
- At Key Stage 2, develop further the use of information technology equipment and software to monitor and display physical data, particularly with regard to science investigations;
(Paragraphs: 13, 33, 62, 100, 120)
- Comply with statutory requirements to ensure the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents contains all the required information;
- Provide a policy for the provision of children in the early years, taking into account recent curriculum guidance for the foundation stage of education;
(Paragraphs: 32, 36, 78)
- Ensure that parents have a clear understanding of the school's homework policy.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	32	56	12	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	81
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	10

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	6	7	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	13	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	13	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at Key Stage 2

In view of the number of eligible pupils being under ten, the table showing percentages of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 or above at Key Stage 2 is not shown.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	81
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

**Qualified teachers and classes:
YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.8
Average class size	27

**Education support staff:
YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	59

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
----------------	------------------

	£
Total income	164224.00
Total expenditure	158915.00
Expenditure per pupil	2091.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	16650.00
Balance carried forward to next year	21959.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	81
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	71	29	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	35	3	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	48	0	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	45	16	10	3
The teaching is good.	71	23	3	3	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	39	13	13	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	13	9	13	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	68	26	3	3	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	39	6	13	3
The school is well led and managed.	52	23	13	9	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	29	0	3	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	39	6	0	3

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

In addition to those who returned the questionnaire, nineteen parents attended the pre-inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector. Whilst the large majority were supportive of the school, a small number stated they would appreciate more information on the progress their children make. A similar number had concerns on the amount and regularity of homework. Whilst several parents expressed concerns over the way in which the school receives questions or concerns, others indicated they are unhappy with the overall management of the school.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

70. Children under five share a class with pupils in Reception and Year 1. Children enter school at the start of the school year in which they become five. Most attend playgroup before joining school. At the time of the inspection, nearly all children had attained the age of five. Assessment on entry, shows that whilst nearly all children have attainment in line with that expected for their age, a third achieve levels above the norm. The school makes good provision for its young children. Whilst nearly all children achieve the officially recommended outcomes by the time they are five, half of them achieve the expected levels earlier. On entry to Key Stage 1, the majority have attainment in reading, writing and mathematics above that expected for their age.

71. Children's progress in personal and social development is good. Staff are sensitive to the needs of children in their first year of schooling. They have created a happy, purposeful atmosphere where children settle quickly into the routines of school. Children work together in a friendly and supportive manner, and show respect for each other, adults and visitors. They take an active part in a variety of self-chosen and adult led activities, and handle resources sensibly. Children are well behaved, and sustain concentration well when working. They make sensible choices from a range of activities available, play well with others, share and take turns. Children respond well to adults. They follow instructions, listen carefully to what they are told, and begin activities eagerly. Children are sensitive to the needs of others, and show obvious pleasure in friends' successes as well as their own. They work well with others, for instance, when buying and selling in their shop, and in games activities when they work to improve skills of throwing and catching.

72. Children make good progress in language and literacy. They have many opportunities to speak and listen to adults and to each other, in groups or as a whole class. For example, they listen attentively, and when required, join in enthusiastically with the story of Stone Soup. At other times, they demonstrate confidence when taking part in discussions and answering questions. Through carefully chosen stories, children begin to recognise an increasing number of words in familiar contexts. They recognise the letters of the alphabet, and associate sounds with them. Children develop good book skills; they handle books well. They understand the terms 'author' and 'illustrator', and correctly explain what each does. They carry out 'pretend' writing as part of their activities within their writing area and 'shop', where they make lists and write down telephone messages. Children learn the correct way to shape letters and copy examples of writing with increasing control.

73. Progress in mathematical understanding is good. Children recognise and count numbers to ten, most to 20 and beyond. They sing and play a range of number rhymes and finger games to reinforce their understanding. Through a variety of carefully directed activities, children develop their understanding of addition and subtraction. They sort objects in a variety of ways: for instance, by colour, shape and size; by threading objects and repeating patterns. Children use correct mathematical language for simple shapes, and compare measurements such as more than and less than. They arrange objects in size order, and construct pictograms relating to information they have collected about the class, including eyes colour and the number of brothers and sisters their friends have. They use the completed

pictogram for a range of number activities including counting and comparing. Children become familiar with handling and identifying coins, and put this into practice when role-playing in the shop. They develop an awareness of capacity and volume through play tasks with sand and water. In so doing, they use quantitative words such as empty and full.

74. Children make sound progress in developing knowledge and understanding of the world. They talk with interest about their environment, and draw a map of their journey to school. They observe and discuss the weather, and understand why we wear different types of clothes for each season. Their understanding of chronology is helped by observing and handling a range of artefacts, including an impressive collection of teddy bears, and a wide range of toys from years gone by. Children know and name parts of the body, and understand that we change as we get older. They explore the textures of different materials, classify them as natural or man-made, and consider the uses for each. Children handle computers with growing confidence and use the keyboard and mouse to control and move items on screen.

75. Progress in physical development is satisfactory. Children make sound progress in their fine manipulative skills. They handle tools, scissors, paintbrushes, construction kits and malleable materials safely, with increasing control. Children run, skip and hop with increasing control. They develop their skills of throwing and catching with a range of small equipment including balls and beanbags. However, children do not have access to the required large outdoor equipment that enables them to ride, climb, balance or enter into imaginative play with friends.

76. Good progress is made in children's creative development. They use a good range of media to draw, paint, print and make models. They create small imaginary environments, and act out scenes in them, exploring ideas and feelings. Children have good opportunities for structured role-play. They were observed developing language and number skills when enacting the roles of customer and shopkeeper in their shop. In assemblies, children sing enthusiastically, tunefully, and with a sense of rhythm.

77. The quality of teaching for children under five is judged to be very good in two-thirds of lessons observed, the remainder being good. All activities are very carefully planned and focus clearly on learning outcomes. Adults use conversation and questions very effectively to draw out children's ideas and develop their confidence. All adults understand the content and desired outcomes of the activities they supervise. This clarity of purpose makes a significant contribution to children's progress and to the standards achieved. Expectations of children's performance are suitably high, and a positive classroom ethos creates an environment in which children are encouraged to make progress. The needs of all children are met very well; this includes higher attainers and those with special educational needs. At all times, the teacher and support assistant provide children with very good role models.

78. Whilst provision for children under five is well managed, there is not yet an overall policy to ensure current practice is maintained and developed. Good procedures are in place to support children's induction into school. A thorough assessment of children's skills and understanding is carried out during children's first half term at school, and this information is used to inform subsequent planning and teaching. Children's systematic development in learning is aided by detailed record keeping, careful observations and ongoing assessment.

ENGLISH

79. Results of the 1999 Key Stage 1 National Curriculum assessments showed the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in reading, to be very high when compared with the national average. The proportion gaining the higher level was above average. Overall standards in reading were consistent with the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. In writing, all pupils reached the expected level, and the proportion reaching the higher level was well above national averages. When compared with similar schools, results in both reading and writing were well above average. Over the past three years, in English, pupils have achieved consistently high standards which are well above the national averages.

80. Whilst assessment results for the small number of pupils at Key Stage 2 were very high, placing them within performance levels of the top 5 per cent of schools nationally, results of such a small number of pupils cannot be relied on statistically. However, performance reflects the trend of the last three years of being above or well above national standards. Results for boys show a rising trend in both key stages. Those for girls show either a rising trend or consistently high performance. This bears testimony to the care the school takes in ensuring that all pupils are challenged at their own level, and receive very good quality support from teachers and support assistants.

81. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are maintained by those pupils currently at the end of both key stages. In both reading, and speaking and listening, pupils achieve standards that are above average at the end of Key Stage 1. The very small number of pupils currently in Year 6, achieve standards well above average by the end of Key Stage 2. In writing, standards are above average at the end of both key stages. The good attention paid to handwriting and presentation of written work, has rectified the weaknesses noted at the time of the last inspection.

82. Pupils make good progress in listening and speaking throughout the school. By the end of Key Stage 1, they listen attentively both to teachers and other adults, and to each other's contribution in lessons. Pupils readily take part in oral work, knowing that their contributions will be accepted, even if they are not accurate; this applies to all pupils, including those with special educational needs. They show confidence in asking and answering questions, and are keen to read aloud, to an audience, examples of what they have just read or written. For example, in Year 1, pupils clearly read out the advertisements that they have written for their lost bike, and in Year 2, pupils read sections of the class book. These skills are built on throughout Key Stage 2, so that by the time pupils leave the school they are very articulate and use a wide range of vocabulary when discussing items of interest, or explaining their views. The opening and plenary sessions, of the Literacy Hour, are used well to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills. Inspection evidence confirms there is no longer any reticence to discuss and converse in the upper part of the school, and, that since the last inspection, very good improvement has been made in this area.

83. Pupils make good progress in their reading skills as they move through the school. In Key Stage 1, pupils develop fluency and confidence in their reading by using the appropriate strategies to decode new words. They read with expression and understanding. They express opinions about the main events in the story and predict what might happen next. Pupils are introduced to simple reference material in class 1, and talk knowledgeably about the 'glossary', 'index' and 'contents' of a book. By the end of Year 2, the higher attainers use an

index to locate given information, read it silently, and put it in their own words. This good work in Key Stage 1, provides an effective springboard for the gradual development of these and other higher order reading skills in Key Stage 2. As a result, by the time pupils leave the school, they read at an adult level, have a love of good literature, and are very willing to share their ideas and views with others. This was clearly seen in class 3, when pupils spoke to the rest of their class about books they would recommend to others, giving good reasons for their choices. Reading skills are used in all areas of the curriculum, to find information from reference material and through use of the Internet for research.

84. Satisfactory use is made of the library in school, and individual classrooms have a plentiful supply of books. Overall, the library provides a satisfactory source of material for the number and range of pupils in the school. Books are clearly arranged according to the Dewey system, and, from a very young age, pupils know how to find a book on a given subject. There are facilities for small groups to work in the library. Many of the pupils are regular users of the library in Wells, which supplements materials available in school.

85. In writing, pupils make good progress throughout the school. This results in attainment being above average at the end of both key stages. The teaching of grammar and punctuation is developed systematically within the framework of the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils write for a wide range of purposes and there is evidence of improvement as pupils move through the school. In Key Stage 1, pupils use their writing skills to compose simple stories, to write letters, to formulate an advertisement for a lost bike, and to write accompanying captions to art and topic work. Handwriting, from all pupils, is of a consistent size and, by the end of the key stage, only a very small number of pupils still form a few letters incorrectly. These good standards are maintained in Key Stage 2. Pupils write formal letters, poetry and well-constructed stories, as well as independent pieces of writing connected to research and topic work. By the end of the key stage, they have a neat cursive style of writing, and use a good level of punctuation. Care is taken in the presentation of written work. Pupils' topic books, and their work displayed around the school, reflect the good use of their writing skills across the curriculum. The criticism at the time of the last inspection, that worksheets inhibited creative writing in Key Stage 2, no longer applies.

86. Pupils enjoy English and respond well to the Literacy Hour. They respond very well to challenging work and to searching questions posed by teachers. They sustain concentration well. They listen attentively to teachers and to each other. Pupils work co-operatively in groups and handle books with care. Pupils take a pride in their work and show a sense of achievement when they complete tasks. When asked, pupils are always able to explain, very willingly and clearly, what they are doing.

87. In both key stages, the quality of teaching ranges from good to very good; it is good in 57 per cent of lessons and very good in 43 per cent. This represents a marked improvement since the last inspection. Teachers plan very effectively to the guidelines of the National Literacy Strategy. Their knowledge of the subject is good and they very effectively use this to stimulate the imagination of the pupils. For example, in a lesson for the oldest pupils in the school, the teacher made very good use of both her literacy and science skills, to enable the pupils to use their inferential and deductive skills. They answered questions on a non-fiction text, which was used as the stimulus for the lesson, and were inspired to stay on task by the effective questioning and good subject knowledge of the teacher. Further good features of lessons are the brisk pace and the good level of questioning which involves all the children.

For example, pupils in Year 1 were encouraged to look very carefully at a child's bicycle, and then explore the best language to describe it. Skilful questioning resulted in reference not only to its colour and obvious features, but also the chain guard, and the shape of the handle bars. Following this lively question and answer session, pupils produced very good written work. The good work by the well-briefed support assistants is a further example of why pupils achieve well. Their help enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress, and it also ensures that higher attainers are given the help they need to complete their varied and challenging tasks.

88. English makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education through well-chosen stories that encourage pupils to reflect on their own experience and behaviour and those of others. For example, Anthony Browne's story; *Hugh and Willy*, which was used in a class 2 lesson, provides good opportunities to discuss aggressive behaviour and the way people's feelings can change over time. The material used as a stimulus for lessons is very varied, including traditional tales, modern stories, books from other cultures, and non-fiction texts. Through them, pupils are encouraged to explore their inner feelings.

89. Resources for the subject are good overall, and are used well. The subject is managed and co-ordinated well by the headteacher. Appropriate in-service training is provided for staff and for governors; the literacy governor has secure knowledge of the subject and takes an interest in what is happening in the classroom. The headteacher monitors the standard of pupils' work, and regularly observes lessons. Good procedures are in place to monitor what pupils know and can do. These include regular assessment of pupil performance, and individual performance targets for all pupils. All issues raised in the last report have been fully addressed. Improvement has been good overall and very good in Key Stage 2

MATHEMATICS

90. Results of the 1999 end of Key Stage 1 National Curriculum assessments, showed the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level to be very high when compared with the national average. The proportion gaining the higher level was above average. When compared with similar schools, results were below average. At the end of Key Stage 2, whilst assessment results for the small number of pupils matched the national average, they were well below those of similar schools. However, with such a small cohort, assessment results do not provide a reliable indicator of school performance.

91. Inspection findings confirm that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school. Attainment for pupils currently at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average. The very small number of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, achieve standards well above those expected for their age. This is an improvement since the last inspection, particularly in Key Stage 2. The analysis of end of key stage assessments led the school to focus on measurement and data in Key Stage 1 and on place value in Key Stage 2. Across both key stages, a greater emphasis has been placed on mental arithmetic, as prescribed within the National Numeracy Strategy. All requirements of the National Curriculum for mathematics are met.

92. Teachers have worked conscientiously, and the numeracy hour has been successfully implemented. This has ensured that pupils are developing a proficiency and confidence in number work. For example, by the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils can count on and back in twos, fives and tens, and find missing numbers in sequences. They are competent when using a number line to 100; most can accurately halve and double numbers, and recognise and write '½' and '¼' as 'one half' and 'one quarter.' By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are proficient at finding solutions to mental problems. This includes negative numbers, fractions, decimals and percentages. They perform mental calculations to find two or three numbers that total 180, when working on angles on a straight line or angles of a triangle. In this work, nearly all pupils measure and draw angles accurately to one degree. The emphasis on pupils finding their own strategies for calculations is having a beneficial impact on their understanding of number, and consequently, their attainment. Throughout the school, pupils are encouraged to use the correct mathematical terminology, and by the end of Key Stage 2, they are confident and accurate when using such terms as parallel, perpendicular, rhombus and kite.

93. Teaching in mathematics is good in both key stages, and has many strengths. The good aspects of teaching, seen across both key stages, are:

- * thorough lesson planning, including different work for different groups of pupils;
- * clear learning objectives which are appropriately related to the National Numeracy Strategy and clearly explained to pupils;
- * resources well prepared and well used;
- * good use of learning support assistants to work with groups within the class;
- * a good pace, particularly in the crisp introduction with quick recall of mental number facts;
- * good relationships between all pupils and adults in the class, creating a purposeful working atmosphere;
- * good classroom organisation, with smooth transition between whole class and group work;
- * good questioning techniques providing teachers with opportunities to check understanding and correct mistakes;
- * plenty of opportunity for pupils to practise what they have learned;
- * high expectations of all pupils.

94. Whilst there are no major weaknesses, occasionally, insufficient time is given to the plenary session to consolidate the work covered during the lesson. On a small number of occasions, teachers interrupted unnecessarily and hindered pupils' concentration.

95. In both key stages, pupils' behaviour and attitude towards mathematics are never less than good, and in Key Stage 2, they are often very good. Pupils work for extended periods of time, concentrate hard on the task, and make good progress. They are actively involved in the lessons and are keen to answer questions and make suggestions, particularly when they notice that the teacher has missed out a number!

96. Numeracy skills are taught well in mathematics lessons. They are consolidated in other subjects such as science, with data analysis and interpretation, and design and technology with measurement. This has a positive impact on pupils' skills with number. They use information technology to give practice in a variety of number skills, or to present data in graphic form.

97. Effective teamwork by all staff and governors, has enabled the school to make a very good start in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy. The co-ordinator monitors planning and outcomes, and gives good support to colleagues. Classroom assistants are well trained and provide very good support. Their ability to look after a year group within the class has a strong impact on pupils' learning and attainment. Regular assessments are made, and results are carefully analysed in order to modify and improve provision. Appropriate targets are set for individuals and whole year groups. Homework is used appropriately to support work done in class. Resources are sufficient in quantity and quality. They are well prepared and are used effectively to enhance learning.

SCIENCE

98. Results of the teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, showed that the proportion of pupils gaining the expected level was very high, consistent with the top 5 per cent of schools nationally. The proportion gaining the higher level was above average. The same outcomes are obtained when comparing results with those of similar schools. End of key stage assessments for the small number of pupils in Year 6, showed overall results to be above national averages, and matching those of similar schools. However, with such a small number of pupils involved, outcomes cannot be relied on to be a secure or exact indicator either of school performance, or of year-on-year comparisons.

99. Inspection evidence shows that attainment for the current Year 2 pupils is above national averages and expectations. Standards for the very small number of pupils in Year 6 are well above average. In both key stages, 'experimental and investigative science' is taught very well. Pupils are able to observe, experiment, predict and use the skills of scientific enquiry effectively. They observe well at first hand, record their findings and, in Key Stage 2, offer well-informed and reasoned explanations of what they have seen, and for the outcomes of their investigations.

100. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know the features of living things, understand that different species of animals are found in different locations and habitats, and know how the changing seasons affect lifestyles. The life-cycles of the frog, butterfly and mini-beasts are studied, and pupils understand similarities between themselves and other living creatures. Pupils know and name the main parts of the human body, and what plants need for healthy growth. Across the key stage, pupils work confidently with a range of materials, which they classify according to a variety of criteria, correctly using vocabulary such as flexible, rigid and transparent. Pupils demonstrate their understanding of living and non-living things, of those objects that float or sink, of natural and man made objects, and of items attracted by magnets and those that are not. They understand the use of electricity, construct circuits, and draw them correctly. Pupils have a good understanding of what makes a test 'fair'. In each activity, pupils devise a number of ways to ensure the investigation is undertaken in a fair manner.

101. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have built effectively on previous knowledge. They

have a clear understanding of the major body systems and organs. Pupils conduct a range of interesting activities, such as investigating the best materials to use as heat insulators. They understand that certain materials change shape and state when heated, and that whilst in some cases the process is reversible, on other occasions it is not. Pupils show a clear understanding of friction and gravity as forces. They devise then carry out a range of experiments to investigate the effect that gravity and light have on plant growth. Following initial investigations, pupils discuss outcomes, review their practice and plan further investigations to include 'control situations' to help validate their outcomes. When results of investigations do not match pupils' predictions, they thoughtfully discuss possible reasons, then conduct further experiments to test their hypotheses. During their work related to plant growth, pupils readily accessed the Internet to gain further information related to their work.

102. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in both key stages. There is clear progression in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. Progress is particularly good in experimental and investigative science. The school focuses on this aspect to good effect. By the end of Year 6, pupils' ability to plan, organise and carry out their work, is much above average.

103. Teaching was judged to be good in all lessons observed, including a quarter where it was very good. Teachers' knowledge of the subject and their scientific understanding are good. They plan a sequence of activities with clear learning objectives that challenge all pupils. A particular feature of the good practice observed is the use of open-ended questions to elicit responses and prompt further inquiry. Specific scientific vocabulary is introduced and used well. Good support is given to all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, and praise good effort. They make effective use of day-to-day assessment to help plan what is to be taught next. In addition to the non-statutory assessments at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5, teachers make clear assessments of what pupils know and can do on completion of each science topic. An impressive portfolio of pupils' work across the science curriculum, provides teachers with further support in their assessment of pupils' attainment.

104. The planned curriculum meets statutory requirements and often acts as a stimulus for other areas of the curriculum, including observational drawing and writing. It plays an important part in helping develop pupils' skills of speaking, listening and questioning, together with aspects of numeracy. Whilst good use is made of information technology to present and illustrate the results of investigations, the school has yet to develop the use of information technology to monitor and display evidence within investigations.

105. The co-ordinator gives good direction for science. A clear and helpful policy, together with a thorough scheme of work provides effective support for staff in their planning. Resources, which include a pond and small environmental area, are satisfactory and used well to promote science.

ART

106. During the period of the inspection only one lesson was observed. Evidence from this lesson, together with a review of pupils' work, and displays around the school, confirms that pupils make good progress as they move through the school. At the end of each key stage pupils' performance in art is above that expected for their age. This is an improvement on the last inspection.

107. Throughout the school good emphasis is placed on observational drawings and detailed sketches. In class 1, pupils make detailed line drawings of houses. Many of these very good drawings show the beginnings of perspective. In this class there are examples of drawings of skeletons, with good detail of small digits. By the time pupils leave the school, these skills have been further extended to include excellent sketches of tools, of Durer's Praying Hands and observational drawings of pond life. Pupils' sketch books, which move with them as they go from class to class, confirm the good quality work and the progression of skills. Good emphasis is placed on three-dimensional work and of working in the style of other artists. These aspects of art were combined very well, in class 2 who studied the work of Escher. Pupils captured the spirit of using mathematical shapes and angles in their models demonstrating Escher's striking style of work. Other impressive three-dimensional work on display includes very realistic 'bronzes' from Benin, and large model astronauts suspended from the ceiling in class 3. A further feature of the artwork in the school is the excellent use of colour in individual paintings and collages. Pupils use a range of media and are taught how to mix and blend paint; the results are vibrant and colourful. Some of the work has a real 'spiritual' dimension, where pupils have looked very carefully at a given example, and captured the essence of the colour and form. This was very evident in the work undertaken in the style of Emile Noble – Poppies on wet paper, and in pupils' paintings of sunflowers, carried out after studying a print of Van Gogh's work and a range of fresh sunflowers. Through the study of artists, and through the close link with topics in other subjects, art makes a positive impact on pupils' cultural development.

108. Pupils' response to art is good. Their positive attitudes are reflected in their use of media and application of skills. Pupils show a real pride in their achievements, and demonstrate a high level of co-operation with each other in practical activities.

109. Evidence from the lesson observed, and from pupils' work, confirms that the standard of teaching is good and often very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan their work well. In the lesson seen, pupils were managed well and had a good variety of media, together with a selection of brushes, to enable them to create their chosen effect. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and play a full part in art lessons. Those with high attainment are equally enabled to make good progress in the development of skills and knowledge. Pupils are provided with a full and rich art curriculum. Resource are satisfactory overall and are used well. There is limited provision for the use of clay, a matter that is presently in hand. The subject co-ordinator gives a good lead in the subject. Good use is made of external visits, including the residential visit to Kilve.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. No design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection. Evidence drawn from a review of pupils' work and of teachers' planning, confirms that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The school provides for the full range of the design and technology curriculum, and at the end of both key stages, pupils achieve standards above those expected for their age.

111. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils discuss ideas and use drawings to help work them out. They have a good understanding of the sequence of planning, designing, making and evaluation of the finished product. In Year 1, pupils design and make finger puppets. Prior to making, pupils write clear step-by-step instructions on how they will proceed, and investigate the best ways of joining the materials they are to use. On completion, pupils evaluate their puppets, and state ways they might be improved. There are effective links with science, as when pupils in Year 2 apply their understanding of electric circuits to devise and construct Christmas scenes and cards that light up. They work co-operatively to plan, make and evaluate a range of wind-propelled vehicles. Throughout the key stage, pupils are introduced to a wide range of materials, and are given good opportunities to learn appropriate uses for each, and the various ways they can be joined.

112. Pupils at Key Stage 2 build well on what they have learnt earlier. Having read *Hiawatha*, pupils design and make their own 'Dream Catcher' mobiles. Pupils produce detailed design briefs, clearly stating the resources to be used together with detailed sketches. The finished products are impressive, and evaluations thoughtful and constructive. Pupils investigate collections of artefacts, such as money containers, to appreciate breadth of design features and ways of working. They then produce their own carefully annotated designs. Pupils apply their skills of planning when they work with an environmental artist. They plan and make structures from willow, within the school grounds. Pupils are currently at various stages of designing and making 'moon buggies' which, when finished, must make a short journey over an uneven terrain.

113. In both key stages, a good range of food technology activities provides pupils with opportunities to practise food preparation skills, develop subject specific language, and discuss issues of hygiene. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about the tasks they have undertaken, and they clearly enjoy the activities provided for them.

114. The subject is managed well. Teachers benefit from a useful policy and a nationally approved, model scheme of work which supports their planning, and ensures the subject is covered in a thorough and sequential manner. Class teachers undertake ongoing assessment of individual pupils' understanding and performance in respect of specific skills. The school has a satisfactory range of resources that are used effectively throughout. The school has successfully maintained the quality of work in this subject that was commended in the last report.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

115. Much of the school's work in geography and history is combined in topics. Only one lesson of history was seen during the inspection, and no geography lessons. Additional evidence from teachers' plans, discussions with pupils, together with review of work, confirms that by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' work is in line with standards expected for their age. Pupils talk about their route to school and the things that they see on the way, and they explain the difference between living in the country and the town. They record the weather, using appropriate symbols, and they know how weather affects people. They make distinctions between their own times and past times, using appropriate language to describe old and new artefacts. For example, one pupil thought that a comic was old because it was yellow, and another thought a toy car was old because the paint had worn off. In the lesson observed, pupils were very articulate in comparing two bicycles, noticing differences in colours, transfers, tyres, gears, and rust.

116. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in geography and history are above those expected for pupils of their age. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, with such a small cohort, care should be taken in making comparisons. A strength is the pupils' ability to recall factual knowledge about the subjects they have studied. For example, they can describe how their village has changed over the last 200 years, and some are able to extend this to the last 1000 years, with the finding of Roman remains. They can talk about the difference between rich and poor people in Tudor times, and a visit to Glastonbury Abbey helped them recall a day in the life of a Tudor monk. They have studied Africa, and know a good deal about Benin, describing where it is, the type of trading done there, and how it differs from Westbury. Good links are made with other subjects including literacy, art and design and technology. Pupils use reference books well, and present their findings neatly. Much of the recent work has been in preparation for a visit to the Millenium Dome, which has successfully excited and enthused them.

117. Teachers' planning is thorough. Opportunities for all pupils, including the more able, to extend their knowledge and to research further information, are good. This aspect was criticised in the last inspection and has shown good improvement. Pupils now use a range of sources to gather information, including CD ROM and the Internet. In the only lesson seen, teaching was good. The teacher led a very effective discussion which encouraged pupils to appreciate the difference between old and new artefacts.

118. The subject is effectively managed, with the co-ordinator monitoring plans and evaluating standards of attainment. Policies and schemes of work that incorporate most recent curricular advice, support teachers' planning. There is good use of artefacts, visits and visitors to bring the subjects alive and place learning in a relevant context.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

119. Limited direct teaching of information technology was seen during the inspection. However, the observation of pupils at work, review of teachers' planning and records, together with scrutiny of work, confirms that at the end of Key Stage 1, attainment is in line with national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above average. Since the last inspection the school has enhanced its provision for information technology, and has a good ratio of computers to pupils.

120. In both key stages, pupils experience keyboard and mouse-operated control systems. Across the school, pupils operate tape recorders to listen to pre-recorded stories and music, and to record items themselves. Pupils in Key Stage 1 understand the importance of switches, buttons and keys in operating functions of basic household items. Those in Key Stage 2, clearly appreciate the importance of computer technology, and our increasing reliance on it for many aspects of everyday life. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress in developing their skills of information technology, those in Key Stage 2 make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory, and, on occasions, good progress in relation to prior attainment. Whilst pupils cover all requirements of the National Curriculum, the school has yet to develop the use of information technology equipment and software in Key Stage 2, to monitor and display physical data relating to science investigations.

121. Computers are in operation, in each classroom and in the 'Meeting Place' for much of the day, providing pupils with good opportunities to develop their skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils' word processing skills enable them to combine graphics and text. They alter the size and position of objects on the screen, and demonstrate their clear understanding of programs used. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils draft, edit, alter size, colour and style of letters to write poems, stories and articles direct to screen. They successfully link their computer skills to other subjects, when they use CD ROM encyclopaedia programs to support learning. Whilst pupils in Year 6 were observed making effective use of the Internet for research, the use of electronic mail is at an early stage of development.

122. In addition to basic numeracy activities, pupils in both key stages make good use of computers for data collecting and handling. In Key Stage 1, pupils gather and illustrate a wide range of information in graph format, before answering questions relating to the graphs they produce. In addition to effective use of graphs to illustrate results of scientific investigations, pupils in Key Stage 2 make impressive use of spreadsheets for collation and calculation. Work undertaken includes the preparation of budgets and calculations for imaginary projects including the refitting of a bedroom, and planning a holiday. In physical education activities, pupils construct spreadsheets on which they record their individual performances on the circuit activities within the leisure centre. Pupils enter and track their weekly performances, which they compare and evaluate.

123. Pupils have regular opportunities to investigate control technology. In key Stage 1, pupils use a programmable toy to enter directions for it to follow. These activities reinforce pupils' understanding of direction, angles and distance, as well as developing skills associated with writing sequenced commands for the toy to follow. In Key Stage 2, pupils operate logo style programs to devise and draw shapes and 'repeat' sequences. A particularly noteworthy

activity linked pupils' computer skills with those of art and mathematics. Having undertaken an observational drawing of a leaf, pupils scanned its outline, then rotated and repeated it to devise a pattern. In both key stages, effective use is made of commercial art programs to enable pupils to design, draw and paint on screen.

124. Pupils clearly enjoy information technology activities, and are eager to apply their developing skills. They work sensibly, either by themselves or in pairs, treating resources with care. Teaching in the few lessons observed was good. Explanations were clear, praise was used well to encourage and motivate pupils. At other times, when pupils required assistance, teachers' responses demonstrated confident expertise. In addition to a well-presented and thorough portfolio of pupils' work across the required curriculum, pupils' work is saved on disc. This not only provides an ongoing record of work covered, but an effective means of individual assessment.

125. The subject is managed well by a co-ordinator who provides effective support for her colleagues. In addition to a useful policy, a clear scheme incorporating recent national curricular guidance assists in planning the step-by-step progression of pupils' learning.

MUSIC

126. Only one music lesson could be observed during the inspection. However, pupils' performance in music was found to be in line with standards expected for their age.

127. Evidence to substantiate this came from the study of documentation provided by the school, from talking to pupils who were using the computer to select music to be played during reading time, and from listening to pupils singing in class and in assembly. All pupils, including those with special needs, make satisfactory progress in knowledge and skills, as they move through the school.

128. Pupils sing clearly, enthusiastically and in tune. Their diction is good and they demonstrate a good sense of rhythm. Pupils in class three sang well, unaccompanied, in their class assembly, which was prepared and taken by two pupils. In the one lesson seen, pupils in years two and three were building on work from the previous lesson, when they had written graphic scores to accompany the reading of a story entitled 'An African Musical Adventure'. In this lesson, pupils worked together in small groups, selected suitable instruments to play their graphic scores, and then practised and performed their compositions. Opportunities were given for pupils to appraise their performance and to suggest how improvements could be made. During the lesson, the majority of pupils demonstrated the ability to clap a given rhythm, following the teacher, or following notation. Teachers' planning clearly indicates that these skills are built on, as pupils move through the school.

129. Pupils' attitudes to music are good. They enjoy lessons, especially when making their own music. They show genuine enthusiasm when working with instruments and exploring the sounds they make.

130. The quality of the teaching, in the lesson seen, was satisfactory. The opening of the lesson, when a tape of African music was playing as pupils entered the room helped to set the scene and stimulate the pupils' interest. The lesson was well planned and well organised. The skills of the support teacher were used well to demonstrate to pupils and to guide their thoughts. The school employs the support teacher, who has good musical skills, to assist those teachers who are less confident in the subject; this works well.

131. At the time of the last inspection, music was judged to be unsatisfactory and not to comply with national requirements. This issue has been fully addressed. A core music scheme has been purchased which is used in conjunction with the nationally agreed guidelines for music. The music curriculum is broad and balanced and teachers' planning ensures that pupils of all attainment levels are challenged, including those with special needs. Music has been given a higher profile, and classes take it in turns to select music for assembly, on a half-termly basis. The music chosen reflects a wide variety of times and cultures, and pupils learn about the composers and the country from which the music originates, as part of the assembly. The school has purchased a good, varied selection of percussion instruments which has enhanced provision and enables pupils to experience the instrumental variety of different cultures. A school choir has been formed and pupils are offered recorder tuition in the dinner break. Musical entertainment is provided for parents and for members of the local community.

132. Parents are rightly very appreciative of the improvements that have been made in this area of the curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. Only one lesson could be observed in Key Stage 1, and none in Key Stage 2. However, discussions with teachers, a review of planning, together with photographic and written evidence, show that pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Their performance is consistent with that expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs play a full part in all activities. All understand the importance of warming up at the start of the lesson, and of cooling down at the end. They recognise the need for exercise to maintain healthy bodies.

134. In an outdoor lesson on the playground, pupils in Key Stage 1 make good use of space, and show an awareness of those around them as they move in different directions. Pupils run, hop and skip with good control over speed and direction of movement. When using a ball or bean-bag, they work well by themselves and with partners, throwing and catching with increasing control. They pat-bounce a ball with growing confidence, and successfully throw balls into a target area. Pupils demonstrate ability to use a bat and hockey stick to control and strike a ball. Their level of control is appropriate.

135. Whilst the school has no hall of its own, it makes effective use of a nearby leisure centre where pupils have ten week sessions. Here, in addition to participating in a range of gymnastic and dance activities, pupils in Key Stage 2 develop ideas and understanding of personal fitness. They set targets for self-improvement, and learn to measure the performance

of others as well as their own. They apply their understanding of information technology and spreadsheets to record, display and evaluate their progress. Pupils utilise the village field for a wide range of seasonal sports, and participate with considerable success in many inter-school matches, including cross country running.

136. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 benefit from a ten week swimming programme at a nearby pool. It is reported that, by the time they leave the school, nearly all pupils can swim the required 25 metres, with many achieving personal survival awards. Good arrangements are made for pupils' outdoor adventurous activities. They are provided for through various field trips, together with residential visits for older pupils.

137. The school actively promotes sport. Its achievements have been recognised by national sporting journals. The school has gained the Football Association's 'Charter Mark Standard for Primary Schools'. The school works in close association with a number of well-qualified coaches for cricket, tennis and football. In addition, pupils benefit from many after-school sporting activities.

138. Pupils have very positive attitudes to physical education and to sport in general. They enjoy the physical activity, and co-operate well within groups and pairs. They listen carefully to instructions, concentrate well, and work sensibly on the tasks set. Pupils are appreciative of the skills of others and acknowledge the good effort of their peers. This was particularly evident during an after school cricket activity, when pupils worked enthusiastically with a coach from Somerset County Cricket Club. The teaching in the one lesson observed was judged to be good. Pupils are stimulated and challenged. The teacher draws attention to good practice and noteworthy efforts.

139. The subject is well managed. A clear and useful policy, together with a scheme of work, supports teachers' planning for the development of pupils' skills across each element of the physical education curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

140. There were few opportunities to see religious education taught. However, lessons observed, together with a scrutiny of work and discussions with staff and pupils, confirm that pupils' make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1, and, by the end of Year 2, attainment meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make good progress across Key Stage 2. This results in standards being above expectations by the end of Year 6. For Key Stage 2, this marks an improvement since the last inspection.

141. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of the Christian festivals such as Easter and Christmas. Many can relate bible stories such as the Parable of the Sower, and Joseph in Egypt with his Brothers. Moral and social development is successfully interwoven with spiritual development, and pupils discuss what makes a good or bad friend, and 'doing the right thing'. The good attainment in Key Stage 2 is largely due to the able cohort of pupils in Year 6. They have a good knowledge and understanding of the symbols

and festivals associated with Christianity, and can compare them with other religions. For example, in Judaism, they know that the Passover is to celebrate the time when the Israelites escaped from slavery in Egypt, and in Hinduism, they know that Divali celebrates Rama and Sita returning from the forest

142. Insufficient teaching was seen to make a judgement about its quality. However, it is obvious that the curriculum is being covered well, and pupils are gaining a sound, and sometimes, good understanding of Christian and other beliefs. There are frequently good links with literacy. For example, pupils in Key Stage 2 research Judaism, and then report back to the class both verbally and in writing. The syllabus ensures that moral and social development is addressed, as well as spiritual development. These together are having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and help to create the good working atmosphere and ethos in the school. The school makes good use of loan facilities to give pupils opportunities to see artefacts from different religions, and the curriculum is further enhanced by visits to the local church, to Wells Cathedral and to a Hindu Temple in Bristol. This all has a positive impact on pupils' understanding of the Christian religion and appreciation of other faiths.