

INSPECTION REPORT

COMBE ST NICHOLAS CE VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Chard

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123828

Headteacher: Mr Stuart May

Reporting inspector: Dr B Male
14906

Dates of inspection: 5 - 7 June 2001

Inspection number: 191780

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Combe St Nicholas Chard Somerset
Postcode:	TA20 3NG
Telephone number:	01460 63116
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Mary Bere
Date of previous inspection:	9/12/1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
14906	Dr B Male	Registered inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9880	T Comer	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30705	G Stevens	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education	Attitudes, values and personal development How good are curricular opportunities?
12116	C Morgan	Team inspector	Science Art and design Music Foundation Stage	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This Church of England voluntary aided primary school takes pupils from four to 11 years old and is maintained by the Somerset Local Education Authority. It is set in the middle of the village of Combe St Nicholas and serves the surrounding villages. At the time of the inspection there were 86 pupils on roll in four classes. Most pupils start school with standards of attainment above those usually expected. Two per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, 13 per cent of the pupils are on the special educational needs register, and there is no pupil for whom English is an additional language. All of these proportions are well below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very popular school, providing a caring and supportive environment and a positive ethos. Pupils have very good behaviour and attitudes to work, and relationships are very strong. Over the years, pupils have attained good standards by the age of 11 in the core subjects of English and mathematics, although standards at the age of seven have been relatively low. The quality of teaching is good in reception and at Key Stage 2, and satisfactory at Key Stage 1. The leadership of the school has been effective in creating the positive ethos and in the general management of the school, but has not sufficiently addressed the issues of lower standards at Key Stage 1 or consistency of provision across the school. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils generally attain above average standards in English and mathematics by the age of 11.
- There are very good standards of behaviour and pupils have very good attitudes to school.
- There are very good relationships across the school.
- There is some good teaching, particularly at the beginning of Key Stage 2.
- Parents are very supportive of the school and make a significant contribution to learning.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment should be higher at Key Stage 1.
- Standards of attainment in science need to be raised at both key stages.
- The balance of the curriculum needs to be reviewed, and strictly planned and monitored.
- The school needs to make more precise use in planning of the assessment information it collects.
- The school needs to be more rigorous in ensuring consistency of provision across the school.

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

The school has already identified the need to address standards at Key Stage 1, review the curriculum and make more use of assessment information.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1996, and has made steady progress since then. Standards of attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved and have been well above the national average for the last three years, English remains above average, although science is now below average. The quality of teaching is still good overall at reception and Key Stage 2, but satisfactory at Key Stage 1. Pupils' standards of behaviour and attitudes to their work are still very good. Some of the issues in leadership and management have been addressed: the school has created systems for evaluating its work, although it needs to make more use of these; the governors' role has been extended, but the school has only just devolved responsibilities to curriculum managers and they have not yet had time to impact on their subjects. In terms of the other key issues raised, the school has raised standards in the subjects of information technology, design and technology and art. There has been slow progress on some of the minor issues raised such as carrying out risk assessments and developing multicultural education. With sufficient rigour, the school will be able to increase this pace of improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	B	A	A	A	very high A*
Mathematics	A	A	A	A	well above average A
Science	B	B	E	E	above average B
					average C
					below average D
					well below average E

The school's scores in national tests for 11 year olds in 2000 were well above the national average in English and mathematics, but well below average in science. Standards in English and mathematics have been consistently at least above average over the last four years, whilst standards in science have declined. The number of 11 year olds was particularly low at the time of the inspection and so was not a reliable guide to overall standards. In general, these continue to be at least above average in English and mathematics, but are below average in science where an average number of pupils attains the expected level (Level 4) but very few attain the higher level (Level 5). Standards in information technology have improved since the last inspection, but the new equipment has not been in school long enough for standards to have reached the national average.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been lower than those at Key Stage 2 over the last four years. An above average proportion of pupils attains the expected level (Level 2b), but very few attain the higher level (Level 3). It is the low proportion of higher attaining pupils that brings down the overall standards.

The school's targets for attainment have generally been achieved or exceeded. The standards achieved by the end of Key Stage 2 represent satisfactory achievement for the pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school and are eager to get on with their work. They approach new work with confidence and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	There are very good standards of behaviour in class and around the school. The pupils are friendly and polite and respectful of adults. They work and play very well together.
Personal development and relationships	There are very good relationships across the school. Pupils have a caring and thoughtful approach to others, and are genuinely concerned for others' welfare. Pupils are keen to take responsibilities and take the initiative where opportunities allow.
Attendance	The rate of attendance is good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 4-5	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	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.

In the school as a whole, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Of the lessons seen, five per cent were very good, 40 per cent good and 45 per cent satisfactory. Ten per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory, mostly at Key Stage 1. This is a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching.

Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and create a positive ethos for learning. Where teaching is good, there is high challenge, a close focus on the learning objectives, and lessons build well on what different groups of pupils have already learned. In these lessons, there is a brisk pace and a variety of learning experiences that create interest and enthusiasm. In the unsuccessful lessons, the pace of learning is slow or the lessons do not sufficiently address the learning needs of all the pupils.

The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is broadly successful in the reception class and at Key Stage 2, but not at Key Stage 1. The national strategies are not followed as a coherent overall programme at either key stage.

There is effective teaching of pupils with special educational needs, and some very good support from teaching assistants.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The planning of the curriculum does not ensure that it is broad or balanced. There is an appropriate range of learning experiences at the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2, but not at Key Stage 1. There is an inconsistent approach that does not ensure systematic coverage of the curriculum.

Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes appropriate provision for these pupils, and the special educational needs co-ordinator exercises effective oversight. The Code of Practice is followed, and individual education plans have mainly helpful targets, although some of these could be sharper. Learning support assistants provide some very effective support for pupils in class.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is good provision for pupils' personal development. There is appropriate provision for spiritual development, good provision for moral development and some very good provision for social development through the strong relationships that prevail. There is sound cultural provision although the multicultural element is too limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a caring and supportive environment and a positive ethos. Arrangements for child protection and for health and safety need revision as there has not been recent training and there is no specific school policy for child protection.

Parents were very supportive of the school in the questionnaires and the meeting with inspectors. The school has good links with parents and they make a very significant contribution to children's learning both at home and in school. The amount of information about the curriculum could be extended.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the school has been effective in creating a positive ethos and in the general management of the school and the many recent developments in buildings and size. The headteacher sets a good tone for relationships in the school. There has been insufficient focus on the curriculum where monitoring and planning need to be more rigorous to ensure that there is appropriate breadth and balance across the school. The monitoring and support for teaching also needs to be more rigorous to ensure parity of provision across the school. The school has only just appointed curriculum leaders, and they have not yet had time to impact sufficiently on their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very supportive of the school and maintain an appropriate oversight under the strong leadership of their chair. They fulfil their statutory obligations, and are continuing to extend their monitoring role. This will be helpful in enabling them to evaluate the outcomes of decisions and establish value for money.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is taking many steps to consider and evaluate its performance, but now needs to be more rigorous in its analysis of the data it collects and in taking the necessary steps to impact on the areas for development it identifies.

The strategic use of resources	The school has invested heavily in its buildings over the last few years both in terms of extensions and necessary repairs. This has allowed it to take on more pupils, and the subsequent increased income will eventually pay for the investment. Income and grants are allocated appropriately and the principles of best value are applied.
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There is a good level of teaching and support staff. The school's accommodation has recently been much improved with the addition of a new classroom, but the room used for assemblies is rather cramped. The school is now able to consider how to make best use of the released rooms. The hard-surface playground is relatively small and there is no designated play area for pupils under five, but the school has access to extensive grassed areas. The level of teaching and learning resources is generally adequate, but the provision and quality of books need improving in the library, and more outdoor equipment is needed for children under five.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching is good. • Pupils make good progress. • Expectations are high. • The school is very approachable. • There is good leadership and management. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents would like to see a wider range of extra-curricular activities.

The inspection agrees with parents' positive feelings about expectations, approachability and the quality of teaching, although this is satisfactory rather than good at Key Stage 1. The range of extra-curricular activities at the time of the inspection was wider than usually found in a small primary school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils enter the reception class with standards of attainment already above those expected for children of this age. They make generally satisfactory progress through the school and overall standards are above average in English and mathematics by the time they leave at the age of 11. Progress is most rapid through the reception year and through Key Stage 2. Progress through Key Stage 1 is relatively slow.

The school's targets and pupils' achievement

2. With very small groups of children it is always difficult to set targets. In the past, the school has set targets in English and mathematics that have been achieved or exceeded. This is likely to be the case again this year.
3. The standards attained by pupils by the time they leave the school at 11 years old represent satisfactory achievement and progress. The standards attained by the time pupils are seven years old are generally satisfactory in terms of national standards but could be much higher for these pupils.

Children under five

4. Pupils enter the school as four year olds with standards of attainment already above the national average. They make generally satisfactory progress through the reception year, and standards of attainment are above those usually found in all areas of learning by the time they move to Year 1.

Key Stage 1

5. In national tests for seven year olds in 2000, the overall standards were average in reading and writing, and below average in mathematics. Scores have generally declined over the last four years. The school's own assessments indicated that standards were also below average in science. An above average proportion of pupils attains the expected level (Level 2b) in these subjects, but very few pupils attain the higher level (Level 3) and it is this that brings the overall standards down. Expectations of the higher attaining pupils have not been sufficiently high over the last few years.
6. Inspection evidence shows that standards this year are in line with the national average in reading and writing, but still below average in mathematics. Standards are also below average in science and information technology. In other subjects, standards are generally in line with those usually found in geography, art, design and technology and physical education. Too few lessons were seen in other subjects for an overall judgement to be made.

Key Stage 2

7. In national tests for 11 year olds in 2000, standards were well above the national average in English and mathematics, but well below average in science. Scores in English and mathematics have been steadily well above average over the last four years, whilst standards in science have declined.
8. The very small number of pupils presently in Year 6 makes overall judgements unreliable, but inspection evidence indicates that, in general, standards in English and mathematics are generally above average. Standards in science are still below average. Standards in information technology are rising but the new equipment and

teaching provision have not had time to bring standards in line with the average, Standards are in line with the average in design and technology, geography and art. Too few lessons were seen in other subjects for an overall judgement to be made.

Progress of different groups

9. There has been a disparity between standards at the end of the two key stages over the last four years. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall, but slow progress through Key Stage 1. This difference is particularly marked in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 3) in at the end of Key Stage 1, which is below the national average in reading and well below average in writing and mathematics, whilst the proportion attaining the higher level (Level 5) in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 has been well above the national average. This difference is associated with the expectations and quality of teaching. There is room for much higher challenge to the higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 1, and in science at Key Stage 2.
10. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in meeting the targets set in their individual education plans. The progress of boys and girls is in line with the general progress of the school: slower at Key Stage 1 than elsewhere.

Literacy and numeracy

11. Within English, standards of reading, speaking and listening are much higher than writing at both key stages. At the end of Key Stage 1, no pupil attains the higher level (Level 3) in writing, and at the end of Key Stage 2, fewer pupils attain the higher level (Level 5) than in reading or in mathematics. This is associated with the amount of practice pupils have in writing and the focus of teaching within this aspect. Standards in the number aspect of mathematics are lower than in other areas of mathematics at Key Stage 1. At both key stages, standards are relatively lower in the investigative aspects of mathematics.

Attitudes, values and personal development

12. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and to learning, and their behaviour is very good. The relationships between all staff and pupils, and between the pupils themselves are very good and continue to be a strength of the school as they were at the last inspection.
13. The youngest children are happy, enjoy being in school and are confident when relating to adults. They are very settled into school routines, enjoy the activities provided for them and show positive involvement in their work. They share equipment and toys sensibly and generally behave very well towards each other. They listen carefully to their teachers, sometimes sitting for a considerable time; for example when the reception class teacher was explaining about coral and creatures under the sea prior to the children constructing clay models of sea creatures. They walk sensibly to and from the main school building and the school field and behave well in assemblies.
14. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils also have consistently very good attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic about their school, and talk keenly about the work that they do. They settle to work quickly when they enter the class and listen closely to all that the teacher has to say, following instructions well. They are sensitive to the needs of others and this was reflected in the lesson on 'responsibility' in Class 4 when the teacher, through skilful questioning, encouraged a lively discussion about how you feel when you are excluded from a group and how we have a joint responsibility to be 'inclusive' of others.

15. Pupils' behaviour is very good and is a strong feature of the school. Pupils are fully aware of the school and class rules because they helped devise them. For example, in Class 4 the pupils suggested some rules that have proved to be very effective. Parents are happy with the quality of the behaviour in the school.
16. Relationships between pupils and all adults in the school are very good. There is a very high degree of respect, trust and understanding between adults and pupils at all times. All staff consistently provide positive role models, so that pupils are able to develop as confident individuals, secure and well prepared for life inside and outside school. In the playground mixed age groups co-operate well sharing equipment and playing sensibly.
17. Pupils' personal development is very good. The school takes both formal and informal opportunities to enhance pupils' personal development well. They give pupils some responsibility; for example, helping with the transfer of young children to and from the reception class, assisting in assemblies, organising and being very involved in services in the church and carrying out regular duties around lunchtime. Discussions in lessons and in 'circle time' (a period of discussion between pupils on topics of personal importance) frequently emphasise pupils' responsibilities to each other and to the community; for example, in Class 3, after a detailed discussion, pupils suggested ways of deterring people from dropping litter. Staff take a genuine interest and pride in how their pupils progress after they have left the school and this indicates the level of care exercised by staff in helping these pupils grow into well rounded individuals.

Attendance

18. Attendance rates are above the national average. Pupils are keen to come to school and arrive punctually.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is good overall in the reception class and at Key Stage 2, and satisfactory overall at Key Stage 1. Teaching is strongest at the beginning of Key Stage 2. Of the lessons seen in the school as a whole, five per cent were very good, 40 per cent good and 45 per cent satisfactory. Ten per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory, mostly at Key Stage 1. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching is significant across the school, and particularly so at Key Stage 1. This relates to the lower attainment at the key stage.

Foundation Stage

20. The teaching of children in the reception class is good overall, and the children get a good start to their education. Of the lessons seen, the teaching was good in over 60 per cent, satisfactory in 25 per cent, and unsuccessful in one physical education lesson. There is a very positive ethos for work and a high degree of challenge in lessons; for example the language used in discussing the book 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch' was of a very demanding level, to which the children responded very well with suggestions of words such as 'scrumptious'. Pupils are managed very well, and the basic skills of numeracy and literacy taught effectively. In planning lessons, more emphasis needs to be given to practical and investigative activities. The unsuccessful physical education lesson was taken jointly with Years 1 and 2 and there were too few learning opportunities for the youngest pupils.

Key Stage 1

21. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, but there is a significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Of the lessons seen during the inspection, ten per cent were good, 70 per cent satisfactory and two lessons unsatisfactory. Teaching is generally satisfactory in mathematics, geography, art and physical education, and often good in design and technology. Teaching has been unsatisfactory in English and science.
22. The teacher manages the pupils effectively and has some good techniques for dealing with the mixed age range class. For example, in a literacy hour lesson she asked Year 1 pupils to pick out capital letters and full stops whilst Year 2 pupils were asked to comment on the language use. Pupils respond well to the teaching and are keen to learn. The areas that need improvement are the level of expectations and the overall planning of the curriculum. Expectations have not been sufficiently high, particularly for those pupils capable of the highest attainment, and the number of pupils attaining Level 3 has been low in all subjects. In some cases, the work expected is of too easy a level and at other times the conceptual level of learning is not sufficiently high. For example, following a very good discussion in geography about local facilities, pupils were asked to draw a picture when they could have written an interesting piece contrasting the positive and negative features of their environment. In science, there has been insufficient emphasis on the higher conceptual levels of the subject.

Key Stage 2

23. The quality of teaching is good overall at Key Stage 2 and particularly strong at the beginning of the key stage. Of the lessons seen, 15 per cent were very good, 40 per cent good, 40 per cent satisfactory and only one lesson was unsatisfactory. The very good teaching was at the beginning of the key stage. Teaching is good in English, and satisfactory overall in mathematics, information technology, geography and art. Teaching is unsatisfactory overall in science. Too few lessons were seen in other subjects for an overall judgement to be made.
24. Expectations are higher than at Key Stage 1, and the pace of work is often brisk. Where teaching is very good, there is a high level of challenge, a range of learning opportunities and pupils are involved in some open-ended and exciting situations. For example, a Year 3/4 geography lesson assigned pupils roles as Greek villagers to discuss the building of an hotel. The pupils responded with enthusiasm to the challenge, and the level of discussion of the environmental issues was very high.
25. In the unsuccessful science lesson, the focus of learning was too broad and there were insufficient practical activities for pupils to consolidate their conceptual knowledge.

Teaching of different groups

26. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is generally effective and there is some very good teaching from support assistants.
27. Pupils make good progress in attaining the expected levels at both key stages, but expectations are too low for the higher attaining pupils, particularly at Key Stage 1 and in science across the school.

General

28. Teachers generally have very good relationships with their classes and manage their pupils well. Pupils respond by taking a keen interest in their learning and sustaining their concentration. Teachers value the contributions pupils make to lessons and this

encourages their positive participation and their confidence in learning. There was a good example of this valuing in a Year 5/6 lesson when the teacher wanted to move on whilst there was still a hand up and she said, "I think we need to move on, is that alright with you, John?". Such consideration sets a very good example to pupils of how to think of each other and work together.

29. In the best lessons, there is a high level of challenge for each different group of that enables each pupil to build on what they have already learned. For example, in a Year 3/4 mathematics lesson on fractions, some pupils worked with practical equipment whilst others were challenged to compute fractional parts mentally. The use of whiteboards in this lesson for pupils to show their answers was very effective in allowing the teacher to respond immediately to different groups. It was the level of questioning that ensured high challenge in a reception class lesson discussing the seashore. The teacher followed up children's statements with open-ended questions requiring them to think more deeply and express themselves in more detail. The teacher's very good knowledge of the individual children enables her to vary her questions appropriately to each individual.
30. Where lessons are particularly successful, there is a close focus on the learning objectives which are shared with the pupils and reviewed at the end of the lesson. The close focus and lack of unnecessary activities means that the pace of these lessons is brisk. For example, there was some very good teaching in a Year 3/4 lesson where the skills and format of letter writing were very clearly explained by the teacher in a practical situation that enabled pupils to put those skills into practice. In a Year 1/2 geography lesson, the teacher's good questioning maintained a close focus on comparing and contrasting skills in discussing the local environment. In a year 5/6 English lesson, the learning objectives, skim reading to pick out main points, were shared with the pupils and the time-frame of the teacher's questions ensured that the passage had to be skimmed rather than read in full.
31. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is generally effective in the reception class and at Key Stage 2, with key skills such as phonics taught well in reception, but not at Key Stage 1. The overall implementation of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have not been fully taken on across the school. Classes follow only three literacy and numeracy lessons a week from the national strategies instead of the required five, and add two further English and mathematics lessons. This means that the overall programmes for the strategies are not followed coherently as the two further lessons do not necessarily cover the elements missed. At Key Stage 1, there are not always even five lessons of English and mathematics a week as required by national and school policy.
32. The planning of other subjects is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that there is appropriate balance over the terms and year. The expectations for each year group is not always made clear and this can result in lack of challenge, or in some cases an inappropriately high level of challenge. Some lessons are timetabled for very long periods, and the time spent on the literacy and numeracy lessons that are taught is often longer than required.
33. The school has a range of effective methods for assessing pupils' progress and their levels of attainment. Teachers have good knowledge of individual pupils and are able to vary their approaches accordingly. The information gained from this assessment is not always used to ensure that lessons focus sufficiently precisely on the learning needs of different groups of pupils. For example, in English, there is not always sufficient focus in lessons on those pupils who have attained Level 2 in writing but not yet Level 3, although the assessments have been made.

34. The teaching of science has not been as successful as the teaching of other subjects because the subject has not always been planned sufficiently rigorously across the key stages to ensure that skills and concepts are taught in context and are revisited at a higher level in subsequent years. Expectations are not always sufficiently high, particularly at Key Stage 1 and the top of Key Stage 2, and conceptual development is not always underpinned by the practical activities necessary to promote understanding. Pupils are not always given sufficient scope to plan their own investigations or to consider their own ways of recording and analysing the outcomes of investigations.
35. Most teachers have been taking broadly the same age groups for a number of years and would benefit from the challenge of re-considering and re-applying their skills in the context of a different class.

The quality of learning

36. The quality of learning, and the rate at which pupils acquire new knowledge, skills and understanding, is generally satisfactory across the school, but slower at Key Stage 1. Pupils are keen to learn, and they work hard in lessons, sustaining their concentration well. In most lessons, pupils have a good understanding of what is expected of them and are able to discuss the what they need to learn. Even the youngest pupils are aware of their needs, and have the confidence to ask; for example, when the teacher read the sentence, "The lighthouse keeper thought of a plan to baffle the seagulls", a child very quickly asked, "What does 'baffle' mean?". Such confidence and very good attitudes are significance inpromoting learning.

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

The quality and range of learning opportunities

37. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided for the children in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall, but opportunities for physical development are limited. The curriculum is planned to promote the required six areas of learning. Work is well matched to the children's needs using an approach very much based on developing their talking and listening skills with rather less emphasis placed on providing opportunities for first hand investigation and play. Children are given plenty of opportunities to talk about what they are doing and an environment has been created that very effectively promotes children's love of books and reading. Visiting parents and friends are also used very well to support children in this regard. Opportunities for children to develop physically are limited by lack of facilities, specifically a safe secure area in which they can run and play at times other than playtime and also the lack of wheeled vehicles. It is also important that the children are provided with activities that meet their particular needs when taking part in shared games sessions with Key Stage 1 pupils.
38. At Key Stage 1 and 2, the curriculum is not planned sufficiently rigorously to ensure that it is broad and balanced, or that it presents a coherent course of study to the pupils. Schemes of work, mostly based on national guidelines, now exist for all subjects, an improvement since the last inspection, but staff are still at a comparatively early stage with regard to using these schemes corporately to influence their long-term planning, mapping out requirements with regard to time and thereby ensuring a consistency of approach throughout the school. As a result there is, for example, a lack of emphasis on number in Key Stage 1, aspects of science are repeated, and opportunities to apply skills and understandings gained in mathematics

and science are inconsistent. Neither the National Literacy nor Numeracy Strategy is followed systematically at either key stage.

39. The school generally provides equality of opportunity for its pupils, but is aware that the frequent withdrawal of pupils for instrumental tuition, the teaching of computer skills and reading to parents and visitors causes significant problems with regard to access to the curriculum and continuity of learning. It is currently addressing this issue to ensure that, at the very least, pupils do not miss a numeracy or literacy lesson, or the same lesson on a regular basis.
40. The curriculum is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Sporting activities such as athletics, football and netball feature strongly, as do art, and the computer club, which is open to a different year group each term. Parents take some clubs such as netball and sometimes football, often arranging matches for the pupils against local teams. The school's commitment to social inclusion is reflected in the weekly homework club for pupils who either find it difficult to complete their homework at home or who want to talk elements over with a member of staff. The school makes very good use of the contribution the community can make to pupils' learning through, for example, regular visits to the school from parents and friends to hear readers, a visit from keepers from the local wildlife park to talk about the animals, very close links with the church and through wider links using the Internet. There are very good links with the local comprehensive school and other secondary schools farther afield that some pupils attend, and effective induction procedures are in place. The school also works closely and very successfully within a group of five local small schools. The recent appointment of an information technology teacher to work within the group on the basis of a day in each school results from this co-operation.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

41. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The daily acts of collective worship make an appropriate contribution to pupils' moral and social development. The room used for collective worship is small which means that pupils have to sit too closely together for comfort and for reflection. A strong feature of the school's provision for spiritual development is the effective relationships and respect that teachers show in their dealings with pupils. In this they are very good role models.
42. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils know what is expected of them and behave well. They know the difference between right and wrong. They understand about rules and older pupils have developed their own classroom rules. Older pupils know the rules for 'circle time' and apply them in different situations, so that when asked to say something about their partner they remember that the rule is to always say something positive. This reinforces the very good relationships between pupils and represents a good contribution to pupils' social development.
43. Provision for social development is very good. There are many good opportunities through the daily life and work of the school for pupils to work together and to co-operate. The playground equipment encourages pupils to do just this and they play well together. Older pupils help with the day-to-day routines such as operating the overhead projector or putting out equipment. Older pupils are responsible for organising and running services in the church and this provides a very good opportunity for pupils to take responsibility. The residential visit gives pupils a good experience of working and playing together away from familiar settings. In the classrooms, pupils help their teachers by giving out books and equipment, and in doing this pupils are expected to use their initiative. A good example of this was in the reception class when a pupil who was giving out sheets of paper found she had

two sheets left over. Rather than ask the teacher what she should do she very sensibly said to the class "I've got two bits left. Who hasn't got any?" There are some aspects of school routines that have the effect of taking responsibility from pupils, for example, the practice of taking reception class pupils to the toilet at the end of the lunch break. This discourages pupils from being independent and taking responsibility for their personal needs, and it also encroaches on curriculum time.

44. Provision for pupils' cultural development is generally satisfactory with appropriate opportunities for visits to places of interest. The school plays a significant part in events such as the village annual Maypole dancing, and, through this, pupils learn about local traditions. Pupils have good opportunities to experience and enjoy aspects of culture such as poetry through visitors coming into school, and music through the school's links with other schools. Parents are satisfied that their children are tolerant of others but in the school there is very little multicultural education with too few opportunities for pupils' to learn about other people's beliefs, values and cultures. The school is aware that this is unsatisfactory and something that it needs to address with some urgency.
45. These findings are very similar to the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Assessment of academic progress

46. The school uses a range of assessment procedures to monitor pupils' progress from the baseline assessment on entry to the school. In English, a bank of reading and spelling tests are used and in mathematics, science and the foundation subjects pupils' progress through the levels of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study are recorded. The results of national tests are analysed and predictions are made for attainment of particular year groups at the end of each key stage. A system is in place, where individual targets are agreed with pupils and parents.
47. Despite these comprehensive procedures, there is little use made of assessment to guide teachers' planning. In most classes, for most of the time, the same work is set for all pupils, despite the fact that each class contains two year groups. Frequently, neither the work set, nor the teaching strategies used meet the needs of the majority of pupils. For example at Key Stage 1, there is a reliance on commercial worksheets in science and workbooks in mathematics, rather than individual or group activities which are specifically designed to match the learning needs of the wide range of abilities in the class. Teachers seldom modify their planning in the light of the ease or difficulty with which pupils manage the tasks set.
48. Despite identifying science as an area needing further development, following the results of last year's national tests, nothing has been done to develop the existing curriculum. Nor has there been sufficient analysis and improvement in the way the curriculum is delivered.

Pupils' support and guidance

49. The school is generally successful in its aim to promote children's safety and happiness and is very concerned for the health and welfare of the pupils. However, it needs to develop its own policy for child protection and ensure that staff have had recent training in child protection and health and safety. Some has already been arranged for the autumn term. The school has appropriate systems to monitor health and safety, but no member of staff has had health and safety training.

50. The school is small and teachers know their pupils well. The agenda of the regular staff meetings ensure that there is appropriate monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress, attendance, behaviour and personal development.
51. The school is very effective at promoting good behaviour. The rewards and sanctions in the school's behaviour policy seldom need to be used because pupils demonstrate such good levels of self-discipline. This is a result of the very effective relationships that pupils have with their teachers. These are based on mutual respect. As pupils respond so well to the high expectations of behaviour, there is little need for extrinsic rewards.
52. These findings are very similar to the last inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. This is a very popular school, and many parents who live outside the village and the surrounding area choose to travel some distance to bring their children. Parents were extremely supportive of the school in their response to the questionnaire and at the meeting with inspectors. The only significant issue that parents raised was the lack of opportunities for extra-curricular activities. The inspection findings are that the range of extra-curricular activities has recently been increased and is now good.
54. Parents are very well involved in children's learning at home and at school. The support parents give is a strength of the school and makes a significant impact on learning. Parents give very good support for homework and there is very good attendance at parent consultation evenings. There is some useful information for parents of children starting school, but there is scope for the school to develop further parents' very valuable support by giving them more information about the curriculum.
55. There is a thriving Parent/Teacher/Friends Association that is very active and raises considerable sums of money. A large number of friends, helpers and parents come into school on a very regular basis to help with reading and other activities. The school values their support, although the ways of maximising this support has not always been well thought out. For example, parents coming in to help with reading take pupils out of numeracy and literacy sessions and other lessons, rather than being organised to offer help during reading lessons.
56. Information for parents is generally satisfactory apart from information about the curriculum which is limited. School reports are very detailed in some aspects but do not always give clear information about the progress pupils have made, or guidance about what pupils need to do to improve.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The headteacher and senior staff

57. The headteacher administers the school effectively and has ensured that the school's aims are met in terms of creating a happy and safe community within the school where pupils are valued and where there is a positive atmosphere of courtesy, care, consideration and respect for others. He sets a positive tone for relationships in the school.
58. The leadership of the school has been successful in overseeing the many recent developments in extending the buildings and increasing the size of the school from

three to four classes. This has taken a great deal of the headteacher's time. There has been insufficient focus on the curriculum, and this has allowed inconsistency to occur and standards to vary. Monitoring and planning need to be more rigorous to ensure that there are appropriate breadth and balance to the curriculum across the school. The timetables for each class need to be balanced across the terms and year to ensure appropriate coverage of the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum. The planning of the curriculum needs to be checked rigorously to ensure that it provides appropriate progress within and between classes.

59. The monitoring and support for teaching also need to be more rigorous to ensure parity of provision across the school. There is some very good practice, particularly at the beginning of Key Stage 2, that needs to be shared with other classes. Learning objectives need to be monitored carefully to ensure that expectations of different groups are sufficiently high. Teachers have not been used to working together in teams or sharing their work with colleagues in a professional context, and will need to adjust to the development of the role of the headteacher and subject co-ordinators in offering more direction and discussion of practice.
60. There is very good co-operation with other primary schools in the area who have formed themselves into a formal group. This has enabled them to apply for grants and extra funding that might not have been available to them as individual schools. For example, a teacher for information technology has been employed between the schools, and there are plans for a music specialist as well. The headteacher has played a leading role in this group, and this has been to the benefit of all the schools, but this role must not be allowed to detract from the focus on his own school.
61. The school has only just appointed curriculum leaders, and they have not yet had time to impact sufficiently on their subjects. The appointment of such leaders was one of the key issues raised by the previous inspection, and the school first attempted to address the issue by the creation of key stage co-ordinators. The new system is designed to enable the curriculum from the Foundation Stage to Year 6 to be seen as a whole and so monitored and regulated in a more systematic way.
62. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is effectively managed. The Code of Practice is fully implemented and there is some very good support from teaching assistants.

The governors

63. The governors are very supportive of the school, and maintain an appropriate oversight of its work under the strong leadership of their chair. They fulfil their statutory obligations, and have overseen the many recent developments to the buildings. They are continuing to extend their monitoring role, and this will be helpful in enabling them to evaluate the outcomes of decisions and establish value for money

Monitoring, evaluation and targets

64. The school is taking many steps to consider and evaluate its performance, but now needs to be more rigorous in its analysis of the data it collects and in taking the necessary steps to impact on the areas for development it identifies. Setting attainment targets will always be difficult for very small groups of pupils and targets set in terms of the number of pupils to attain Level 4 in English and mathematics have been fairly easily met which might suggest they could be higher. There is no statutory requirement to set targets for the number of pupils to attain Level 5, but such targets might be helpful in this case.

The budget and best value

65. The school has invested heavily in its buildings over the last few years both in terms of extensions and necessary repairs. This has allowed it to take on more pupils and increase the number of classes, which is beneficial in terms of reducing the age ranges in each class. It is projected that the subsequently increased income will eventually pay for the investment. Income and grants are allocated appropriately and the principles of best value are applied.
66. The budget is set carefully by the headteacher and governors, and due account taken of changes in income and expenditure. The school development plan is fairly marginal to the budget as it covers only a small portion of the school's expenditure. It would be easier to track value for money in the budget if the scope of the plan were extended or if targets were attached to different spending areas of the budget. This would help ensure that budget decisions can be linked to educational priorities. Specific grants are allocated appropriately, and the principles of best value are applied. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

67. There is a good level of teaching and support staff, and the recent increase in the number of teachers has had the beneficial effect of reducing the age range in each class.
68. The school's accommodation has recently been much improved with the addition of a new classroom. The school is now able to consider how to make best use of the released rooms. The hard-surface playground is relatively small and there is no designated play areas for pupils under five, but the school has access to extensive grassed areas. The grassed area adjoining the playground is being developed for pupils' use, and will be a very valuable addition to recreational space.
69. The level of teaching and learning resources is generally adequate, but the provision and quality of books need improving in the library, and more outdoor equipment is needed for children under five.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In order to maintain above average standards and ensure consistent provision, the school needs to:

- 1) Raise standards of attainment at Key Stage 1 by ensuring that:
 - the programmes of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are followed;
 - the level of challenge is appropriately high for all pupils;
 - there are coherent and balanced programmes for all subjects. (para 5)
- 2) Raise standards in science across the school by:
 - planning for a coherent and effective coverage of all units of study;
 - adopting a more practical and investigative approach to teaching and learning;
 - ensuring that expectations are sufficiently high. (para 112)
- 3) Review the balance of the curriculum by ensuring that:
 - the time allocated to each subject is appropriate for the programme to be studied;
 - timetables reflect this balance and are adhered to over the term;
 - the units of study suggested by the national Qualifications and Curriculum Authority are planned to fit the school's overall curriculum;
 - the development of concepts and skills is made explicit;
 - the level of challenge is made clear for each age group. (para 38)
- 4) Make more precise use in planning of the assessment information it collects by ensuring that:
 - lessons build precisely on what pupils are assessed to have learned already;
 - the level of challenge in lessons is always appropriately high for each year group;
 - children are enabled to understand what they need to do in order to progress and improve;
 - the marking of pupils' work focuses on recognising achievement and what they need to do next. (para 47)
- 5) Ensure consistency of provision across the school by:
 - being more rigorous in the monitoring of planning;
 - setting clear standards and expectations for the quality of teaching;
 - sharing good practice across the school;
 - enabling teachers to develop expertise with other age groups;
 - continuing to build the monitoring and support role of subject co-ordinators;
 - further develop the multicultural aspects of the curriculum. (para 58)

The school will also wish to address the following minor issues:

- extend the scope of the school's development plan and sharpen its targets (para 66);
- ensure that there is a school policy for child protection and that staff have training (para 49);
- develop the library and review the quality and quantity of books (para 69);
- extend the use of investigative approaches in mathematics (para 108).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	36
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8	36	44	11	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	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	n/a	86
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	n/a	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	n/a	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	n/a	11

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	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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
	2000	6	9	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	5	6
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	15	14	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (93)	93 (87)	100 (93)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	15	15	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (73)	100 (80)	100 (60)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	3	7	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	2	3
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	9	8	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (77)	80 (69)	90 (85)
	National	75 (70)	72 (68)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	3	3
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	7	8	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	70 (54)	80 (62)	80 (69)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

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	75
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)	4.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.6
Average class size	21.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a

Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a

Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	208,621
Total expenditure	205,219
Expenditure per pupil	2,415
Balance brought forward from previous year	11,578
Balance carried forward to next year	14,980

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	86
Number of questionnaires returned	52

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	23	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	35	8	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	63	37	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	37	12	2	0
The teaching is good.	62	35	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	37	2	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	19	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	73	27	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	42	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	40	52	8	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	42	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	38	23	6	4

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

71. Most children enter the reception class with standards of attainment already above average. The great majority of children in the present reception class have already exceeded the standards expected by the end of the Foundation Stage in almost all areas of development. The curriculum is planned according to the Foundation Stage curriculum, although in its implementation it more closely resembles the approach required for the National Curriculum for pupils aged five and over. Most activities involve the teacher engaging in a very structured discussion with all the pupils. Although this works well in language and literacy sessions, overall the children spend too much time each day sitting on the carpet in group discussion with the teacher. This is only possible because of the small numbers in the present class and the very good social skills of the children, who are polite and well behaved even when concentration wanes. It does, however, limit the amount of time children spend on practical activities, finding out new things for themselves rather than discussing past experiences. The children inevitably spend a great deal of time as listeners, while the teacher misses opportunities to engage with individual children during practical activities. The teaching strategies used to develop pupils' language and literacy skills, their personal and social development and elements of their creative development are very successful. However, in areas which need a less structured, more practical and investigative approach, teaching is less successful. Thus teaching of communication, language and literacy, and provision for children's creative and personal and social development is good. There are weaknesses in the teaching of mathematical skills and in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. Provision for children's physical development is unsatisfactory.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. The majority of pupils enter the reception class with good social skills. They are confident and independent in their relationships with adults and settle quickly into class and school routines. The reception class offers children a happy, secure and structured learning environment, which builds on the children's good existing social skills. A calm, friendly and encouraging atmosphere prevails, and children contribute to discussions, knowing that their opinions are valued. They listen attentively to their teacher and to each other, play co-operatively and sustain interest in activities for considerable lengths of time.
73. Expectations of children's behaviour are high, and children are encouraged to work independently and show a particular maturity in self-direction and respect for others. When given opportunities to make independent choices of activity, children combine well to develop lengthy and sustained imaginative activities such as running a restaurant.

Communication, language and literacy

74. The school provides very good opportunities for children to develop their communication, language and literacy skills and by the end of the reception year, nearly all are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals. Speaking and listening are at the core of the provision and the teacher constantly encourages children to talk about their experiences, express their opinions and experiment with new vocabulary. If they do not understand something, most are keen to extend their understanding through asking questions and listening carefully to explanations. This leads naturally

to reading and writing, and nearly all children can write in simple sentences with well formed letters and appropriate simple punctuation. Most know the sounds of individual letters, using this knowledge to spell simple words accurately and give sensible approximations for more complex words. They are then able to read their own writing back to the class. Nearly all children can read simple text with pleasure, and this good progress in reading is supported by regular and frequent reading and discussion of stories with an adult. There is a daily focus on language and literacy based on the National Literacy Strategy. The use of language for reading and writing is developed effectively through regular sharing of stories. The children automatically think of themselves as readers and writers; they regard books as a source of interest and pleasure and writing as a natural means of communication.

Mathematical development

75. This area of learning is well provided for in a daily numeracy session. Most pupils have a good understanding of basic addition to ten and some pupils can do simple mental addition up to 20. When given practical equipment they can count on and back with confidence. During the inspection, the children were given too few opportunities for developing their mathematical learning through a range of practical activities. There is an insufficient awareness of how to encourage mathematical thinking through carefully planned play activities and by 'playing around' with numbers. The teaching of number is highly formalised and concentrates on the abstract world of number. Opportunities for children to develop their own sense of number and calculating through sorting, playing with a range of materials and grappling with a range of concrete problems are limited.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

76. The planned activities for this area are good, but in practice are highly structured and give limited opportunities for pupils to engage in practical activities. During the inspection, pupils discussed the story of the Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch, displaying a remarkable understanding of the nature and purpose of a lighthouse. The pupils were then encouraged to relate their experiences of seaside holidays. However, there were limited opportunities for carefully planned play activities which would give the children opportunities to develop scientific ideas, experiment with the properties of sand and water and enable the teacher to ask carefully targeted questions. Children, as a group, are encouraged to describe what they have done in the past rather than to explore and talk about new learning, take decisions and solve problems.
77. The classroom itself presents a lively and stimulating environment. A collection of plants leads to discussion of what plants need to grow. A tank containing tadpoles and another containing axolotls provide examples of living creatures as a focus for enquiry and close observation.
78. There are good opportunities for children to use a computer and they have gained sufficient confidence and skills to work with simple programs. Most children are familiar with the mouse and space bar and some can use the keys to make directional moves.

Physical development

79. Although all of the children have achieved all the Early Learning Goals in this area, the opportunities for pupils to develop their physical skills are unsatisfactory. An afternoon at the playing field was spent in activities such as cricketing skills which are

inappropriate for children in the Foundation Stage, rather than in activities which would give them confidence in their own ability to control, and manipulate a range of suitable apparatus. Combined with an absence of large wheeled toys and climbing apparatus, which would help children to develop increasing control over their bodies, the school fails to plan activities that offer appropriate physical challenges. Little is provided to help pupils develop skills of co-ordination, manipulation, control and movement. Spontaneous games such as 'follow my leader' are initiated by the class teacher, but the planned curriculum provides insufficient opportunities for pupils to climb, slide, swing, balance or use a range of large equipment. There is no safe, designated play area specifically for the youngest children.

80. The children handle scissors, brushes, pencils and crayons with some skill and appropriate opportunities are provided for children to develop their manipulative skills.

Creative development

81. Opportunities for the children to express themselves in creative ways are good, and most have already exceeded all the Early Learning Goals in this area. Opportunities for role play are a particular strength, and the children are confident in expressing and communicating ideas through imaginative play. They take on different characters and explore and develop their roles and feelings to create their own settings.
82. There are good opportunities for the children to express themselves through a variety of media. They experiment with colours and record work in other curriculum areas through the medium of art. They listen to music and act out stories such as 'We're Going on a Bear Hunt' singing the chorus and miming the various stages of the story. The classroom is a stimulating environment in which creativity, originality and expressiveness are valued. Children are made aware of the work of different artists, and have painted their own versions of Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers'. Good links are made between the different aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum; for example, following a discussion about the seaside, the children made careful clay models of coral. Displays of collage flowers link well to the topic on plants.

ENGLISH

83. **At the end of Key Stage 1, standards of attainment are broadly in line with the national average and pupils make slow progress through the key stage. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards of attainment are above the national average, and pupils make good progress. Standards at the top of Key Stage 2 are broadly in line with those found by the last inspection.**

Key Stage 1

84. The school's scores in national tests for seven year olds in reading and writing in 2000 were in line with the national average. As pupils leave the reception class with standards of attainment already above average, this represents slow progress through the key stage. Inspection evidence suggests that standards this year are still broadly average but that standards in reading are higher than those in writing. Most pupils attain the expected level (Level 2) but few attain the higher Level. These standards could be higher for these pupils.
85. Standards in speaking, listening and reading are in line with those usually found. Most pupils listen well and take account of what other have said. They express their

ideas clearly and with confidence. Pupils in a geography lesson were able to express very clearly their ideas about features of the environment they liked and disliked. There are few opportunities for pupils to discuss things in groups or pairs, or to direct discussions themselves.

86. In reading, most pupils read appropriate texts with some fluency and understanding of the words, but few have attained the higher level of appreciating main points and expressing their ideas about the texts they have read. There are extra wholeclass guided reading sessions although these are not on the timetable, but as these do not follow the programmes of the National Literacy Strategy they do not always address the higher level skills that would provide the challenge pupils need to attain Level 3.
87. Standards in writing are average in terms of the number of pupils attaining the expected level (Level 2), but very few pupils attain the higher level where writing is organised, imaginative and clear, and words are chosen for variety and interest. Pupils have not made sustained progress since the reception class in terms of developing their writing skills because lessons do not always build sufficiently well on what pupils have already learned. Opportunities for writing are sometime missed in other subjects; for example, following a good discussion in geography, pupils were asked to draw a picture, and in an English lesson pupils merely rearranged some sentences about Florence Nightingale rather than being challenged to write their own pieces.

Key Stage 2

88. In national tests for 11 year olds in 2000, the school's scores were well above the national average, and well above the average of similar schools. This continued a four year trend of such standards. Inspection evidence suggests that standards will not be so high this year, partly because there is a very small group of pupils and large fluctuations can happen. Taking the key stage as a whole, standards in reading are generally well above the national average both in terms of the numbers of pupils attaining the expected levels, and in terms of those exceeding it. Standards in writing are above average in terms of the number of pupils attaining the expected levels, but relatively few pupils attain the higher levels.
89. Standards in speaking and listening are generally above average. Where pupils are given opportunities to discuss things and put forward their points of view they do so very well, and are able to express their views clearly and cogently.
90. Reading skills are generally well above expectations. Most pupils read with appropriate fluency and understanding, and many are able to look for meaning beyond the literal, and are able to refer to the texts when expressing their views. For example, Year 5/6 pupils reading a non-fiction piece about bats were able to select sentences that supported the points that they were making.
91. Standards of attainment in writing are above average. There are some good examples of expressive writing, with even some younger pupils able to write complex and sometimes well balanced sentences; for example, "I grabbed my luggage and followed the rest through the gate, stopping to take another sniff of the fresh pine air". However, relatively few pupils attain the higher levels where vocabulary choices are imaginative and words are used precisely. This is partly because there are relatively few opportunities for pupils to engage in extended pieces of independent writing, or to review and amend their work in terms of clarity and style as well as in terms of punctuation errors and spelling mistakes.

Attainment and progress of different groups

92. Pupils with special educational needs at both key stages make appropriate progress. The attainment of girls is higher than that of boys, but this is in line with the national trend. Pupils at Key Stage 1 do not make such rapid progress as those at Key Stage 2, especially those capable of attaining the higher levels.

The quality of teaching

93. The quality of teaching is generally unsatisfactory overall at Key Stage 1, as it does not sufficiently challenge the higher attaining pupils, and the teaching of literacy does not provide a coherent overall programme. Teaching is good overall at Key Stage 2, with some very good teaching at the beginning of the key stage.
94. Where teaching is very good, there are high expectations and a range of strategies to promote thinking and understanding. For example, in a very good Year 3/4 literacy hour lesson the teacher's very lively approach engaged the pupils' interest well and a very good focus was set up with a real reason for writing a letter. This required the pupils to consider what they were going to say and what effect their style would have on the reader.
95. Where teaching is good, it builds well on what pupils have already learned, and the structures of the lessons focus teaching precisely on these targets. For example, in a good Year 5/6 lesson, the focus on skim reading and selecting main points was well maintained through the use of timed activities. In this lesson, very good use was made of pupils working together in pairs and groups to discuss the text. This sort of work is very valuable in extending understanding.
96. The school has a very unusual approach to implementing the national literacy hour. Classes follow the programme for only three days a week instead of the recommended five, and are supposed to add two English lessons of their own. As these extra lessons do not necessarily follow those elements of the national programme that were omitted, the overall programme is not followed. The individual adaptations to the programme, and the freedom teachers have to plan their own two lessons means that the overall curriculum is not coherent, nor does it ensure progress across and between the age groups. The following of the National Literacy Strategy is not a statutory requirement, but there is an obligation to ensure that any alternative arrangements constitute a coherent course of study.
97. There is some opportunity for extended writing in other subjects such as history and geography but most work in other subjects is confined to short accounts that do not offer sufficient scope to develop skills.
98. The school is beginning to use information technology at Key Stage 2 with pupils writing directly on to screen and using word-processing facilities to amend and correct their writing. Older pupils are beginning to make use of information technology for research purposes and are able to access and use information from encyclopaedia programs. This development is not taking place at Key Stage 1.
99. The co-ordinator for the subject is very recently appointed and has not yet had time to impact upon her subject. Resources are generally adequate, but the quality and range of books in the library needs improving. The library is situated in the room used for assemblies and for teaching groups, and at the time of the inspection it was so cluttered with display boards and other equipment that it was impossible to access many of the books. The building of the extra classroom has given the school the opportunity to develop the library and the adjacent computer suite into a learning centre for the school.

Mathematics

100. **Standards of attainment are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2, but below average at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with above average standards and make unsatisfactory progress through the key stage, but make good progress through Key Stage 2. Standards at Key Stage 2 are higher than those found by the previous inspection, but standards at Key Stage 1 are lower.**

Key Stage 1

101. The school's scores in national tests for seven year olds in 2000 were below average overall. An above average number of pupils attained the expected level (Level 2b) but no pupil at all attained the higher level (Level 3). It was the failure to challenge the higher attaining pupils that lowered the standards.
102. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are still below average this year. Standards in the number and algebra elements are below those expected and well below those expected for more able pupils.
103. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with above average attainment, and make unsatisfactory progress across the key stage. This is a reflection of both the way in which the curriculum is organised and the lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils. The National Numeracy Strategy is taught for only three days each week, and a published scheme, based mainly on workbooks, is used on the other two days. There is a lack of emphasis on number work, and this is reflected not only in the national test results but also in the pupils' work. The fact that no pupil achieved the higher level in the national tests reflects the lack of challenge presented to pupils, because last year's Year 2 pupils, now in Year 3, have already shown the ability to achieve higher standards.
104. Pupils are able to work with coins, gaining an understanding of money and can tell the time to half and quarter past the hour. They can use such terms as 'greater volume than' when discussing capacity and practice estimating and weighing various objects. However, their understanding and use of standards units of measurement is insecure; for example, one pupil was asked to describe something he could see that was about ten centimetres long pondered and said "It's about from here (the main library) to Mrs West's classroom!" The amount of work completed in exercise and work books is very little to show for two and half terms' work, and very little of the work is differentiated according to the ability of the pupil. Pupils enjoy mathematics and are confident when answering questions except those concerned purely with number where their lack of knowledge and understanding of number bonds and patterns makes many hesitate before responding.

Key Stage 2

105. The school's scores in national tests for 11 year olds in 2000 were well above the national average, with a high number of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 5). This continued a four year trend of well above average standards. Inspection evidence indicates that standards will not be so high this year. This is partly because there is a very small year group in Year 6 and with small groups standards can vary greatly from year to year. Taking the key stage as a whole, standards are generally above average and pupils make good progress through the key stage. The good progress results from the higher level of challenge and the better quality of teaching.
106. Pupils in Year 3 quickly adapt to pencil and paper procedures to record number and are given plenty of practice in the four rules of number especially addition and

subtraction. The work in their books reflects the increased pace in their learning as, for instance, they add and subtract three and four figure numbers and are introduced to simple multiplication and division. They can identify two and three-dimensional shapes, draw and interpret tally and bar charts, develop an understanding of area and tell the time using analogue and digital clocks. By the end of the key stage, pupils have developed their understanding of number and can work to two places of decimals, write fractions as decimals, understand simple percentages, draw graphs in four quadrants, interpret straight line graphs and understand negative numbers. Pupil's mental calculation skills are well developed through regular practice and they tackle real life questions confidently, using a very good range of methods in problems involving long calculations such as adding up a 'Tesco' shopping bill.

107. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. They are well supported by classroom support assistants who often sit with them during whole-class sessions quietly explaining meanings and encouraging them to answer, thereby boosting their self-esteem and making them feel included in the activity. For example, a Year 3 pupil working with a classroom support assistant uses blocks to work out a third or quarter of a number. The assistant's patience was rewarded when the pupil suddenly exclaimed "Oh this is just sharing really isn't it!"
108. There are a few examples of mathematics being applied across the curriculum; for example, in Class 4 pupils drew a graph to show how many times they say 'ah' and 'um' in a given time and in Class 3 they weighed the rubbish collected in one week. However, overall, there is little evidence of the application of mathematics, and neither is information and communication technology used extensively to enable pupils to develop their mathematical thinking. Both issues need to be addressed in order that pupils both gain a sense of purpose with regard to their mathematics and also to develop their thinking further.
109. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall but good at the beginning of Key Stage 2. Where the teaching is good, pupils achieve well, acquiring new knowledge and increasing their understanding as a result. These lessons proceed at a good pace and the teacher has high expectations, pitching questions according to the ability of the pupil, often requiring them to 'explain how' and involving all in the success of the session. Time parameters are set and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Planning reflects the differing needs of the pupils and the plenary session of the lesson links directly to the learning objective ensuring good ongoing assessment of progress. For example, in Class 3 the learning objective was to place fractions accurately on a number line. At the end of the lesson the pupils were asked to demonstrate what they had learned, enabling the teacher to judge progress and plan her next lesson appropriately.
110. Some pupils, especially at Key Stage 1, are given too many worksheets, many of which are either not completed or are undemanding of more able pupils; merely requiring the filling in of missing numbers and encouraging pupils to work individually and in silence rather than discussing their work in order to deepen their understanding.
111. Monitoring of the mathematics curriculum is at an early stage of development. The co-ordinator needs, as a matter of urgency, to establish procedures that will ensure the subject is planned and delivered effectively throughout the school. The National Numeracy Strategy needs to be taught consistently throughout both key stages, and the curriculum planned to ensure continuity of provision.

SCIENCE

112. **Standards of attainment are below national expectations at the end of both key stages. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress across the school. This is lower than at the time of the previous inspection.**
113. There are no national tests for seven year olds in science, but the school's own assessments in 2000 show that standards were below average, with no pupil attaining the higher level (Level 3). Inspection findings indicate that standards are still below average at the end of Key Stage 1, especially in terms of those attaining the higher level.
114. The school's scores in national tests in 2000 were well below the national average overall. An average number of pupils attained the expected level (Level 4), but very few attained the higher level (Level 5). As with Key Stage 1, it was the failure to challenge the pupils to the higher levels of attainment that lowered the overall standards.
115. Throughout the school, there is inadequate coverage of the science curriculum. At Key Stage 1, pupils' science teaching is largely through the completion of worksheets from commercial schemes, many of which are of limited scientific content. For example, in a unit of work on the earth and space, pupils were required to draw a space monster or the inside of an imaginary spaceship. There is little evidence that pupils are given the opportunity to explore scientific ideas through practical activities and carefully planned investigative work. No science was being taught at Key Stage 1 at the time of the inspection despite significant gaps in the coverage of the topics allocated to the Year 1/2 class.
116. In the Year 3/4 class, a much more exploratory and investigative approach to the teaching of science enables pupils to make good progress in their learning. However, both year groups follow the same curriculum and more challenging tasks are not being provided for higher attaining pupils, several of whom find ways of increasing the level of challenge in the activities for themselves. For instance, when asked to separate sand and water through filtration, a few children discovered that the grains of salt were fine enough to be filtered through the mesh of a sieve. In the same class, other pupils were trying to separate different sized pulses by hand rather than by using the sieves provided.
117. The more investigative approach fostered in the Year 3/4 class is not maintained in Years 5 and 6. Pupils receive a great deal of complex and technical information on topics which they have little opportunity to explore in depth or reinforce their understanding through their own investigations. Where practical activities are introduced into lessons, such as wiring circuits in series and in parallel, pupils are told what to do and what they will discover rather than being allowed to work it out for themselves. As a result they know that things happen but do not understand how or why.
118. Work in pupils' books is largely copied diagrams and information with no evidence of either structured or open-ended experiments. Inadequate curriculum planning for science results in pupils reaching the end of Year 6 without having covered all the units of study. Some units, such as 'Materials' and 'Earth and Space' are covered twice with little increase in knowledge and understanding between Year 2 and Year 6. The missing work is covered by extensive use of 'revision books' and practice papers before national tests are taken.

119. In mixed age classes, despite the wide range of ages and abilities, pupils frequently undertake the same tasks. Less able pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, struggle to understand a very theoretical and teacher dominated curriculum, while higher attaining pupils are denied challenging tasks which would allow them to generate their own theories and test their own hypotheses. As a result, pupils find it difficult to develop their knowledge of scientific ideas or make connections between different aspects of science and everyday experiences. They have insufficient understanding of scientific concepts in order to make sense of what they have been told. As a result, their higher order scientific skills: predicting outcomes, making inferences, concluding and evaluating based on evidence and using technical vocabulary accurately, are all underdeveloped.
120. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and is therefore in a good position to offer leadership. The need is now to develop the curriculum across the classes to ensure there is adequate coverage of the Programmes of Study.

ART AND DESIGN

121. Only one art lesson was observed during the inspection, but a scrutiny of the portfolio of completed work and displays on the walls indicates that standards of attainment are in line with those usually at both key stages. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
122. There was no previous scheme of work, despite this being a key issue in the previous inspection report, but the school has recently adopted national guidelines. Despite the absence of a proper framework of skills development, pupils become increasingly confident as they move through the school in handling a range of media, including textiles, paint and clay. Good examples of pupils' work are evident in most classrooms, particularly in the reception class and in the Year 3/4 classroom. Here pupils have looked at the work of the artist Patrick Heron, and created their own collages of recycled materials as part of a general topic on the environment. In Years 5 and 6, pupils have made giant masks to complement their work on Beowulf in literacy lessons. Although much of the art work on display is linked to other curriculum areas, appropriate attention is given to the development of artistic skills and the uniqueness of art as a subject in its own right.
123. Resources are good and support work in a wide range of media. A good range of posters introduce pupils to the work of different artists. A visit by an African drummer was used as a focus for art work at Key Stage 2.
124. The recent appointment of an enthusiastic co-ordinator with the expertise to develop the subject has already raised its profile throughout the school. She provides good support and advice for colleagues but has yet to monitor teachers' planning or observe teaching.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

125. It was only possible to observe one lesson at Key Stage 1 and none at Key Stage 2. Pupils' work around the school indicates that standards have improved since the last inspection.

126. National recommendations have been adopted providing a scheme of work that ensures continuity and progression throughout the school and this is also an improvement since the last inspection.
127. In the lesson observed at Key Stage 1, good teaching involved the pupils observing and drawing, in detail, playground equipment, prior to designing and making their own. Through skilful questioning, the teacher reminded pupils of previous work when they had used different types of fasteners. They then describe playground equipment from memory before going outside and observing it at first hand. Pupils use appropriate language such as 'cylinder' and 'oval', and the teacher drew their attention to the way the different parts are joined reinforcing previous learning. She also emphasised the triangular aspect of many of the designs. This was helpful in enabling the pupils to understand the nature of the structures.
128. The co-ordinator, who assumed the role in January 2001, has not yet had the opportunity to observe lessons, but is confident, through the photographic evidence, the displays around the school and discussions with staff, that the scheme of work is being followed. She manages a small budget that is sufficient to maintain resources at an acceptable level.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

129. It was not possible to see any history lessons during the inspection and so no overall judgements can be made.
130. **Standards of attainment in geography are in line with those usually found at both key stages. This is generally in line with the findings of the previous inspection.**
131. Only one lesson was seen at Key Stage 1. In this lesson, there was a good focus on the skills of comparing and contrasting in the context of the local environment. The teacher had provided a very good range of resources including maps and aerial photographs. There was a very good level of discussion and pupils were able to express themselves clearly and identify those features of the locality they liked and those that could be improved. Some younger pupils saw these improvement in very personal terms; for example one suggested, "I think they should pull down the pub and build a toy shop".
132. The very good Year 3/4 lesson where pupils took on the role of Greek villagers to discuss the building of a new hotel complex has already been described. This presented a very high level of challenge, both in terms of the role play and in terms of the geographical concepts involved. Pupils proved to be particularly adept at putting themselves in the position of, for example, fishermen and could suggest that the hotel would on the one hand provide an extended market for their fish, but on the other hand that the increase in water sports could pollute the water and drive fish away. In the Year 5/6 lesson seen, the teacher set up an interesting demonstration of river erosion using sand, gravel and stones in some guttering. This practical demonstration was useful in developing understanding of the physical processes involved, but there was little opportunity for pupils to follow this up with different arrangements of stones and sand or to keep the detailed records of the differences that would have enabled them to consider the effect of the different factors involved.
133. The co-ordinators for each subject are recently appointed and have not had a chance to influence their subjects in other classes. The school is following some of the

national Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's units of work in each subject, but these have not been tightly linked to the timetable to ensure that an appropriate amount of time is given to the study of each unit. As they develop their roles, the co-ordinators need to ensure that the curriculum makes clear the expectations for each age group in terms of skills and concepts as well as the content to be covered.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

134. Although standards of attainment are rising, they are still below those normally expected at the end of both key stages. Although still below average, standards have risen since the previous inspection.
135. The school has been proactive recently in addressing the need to raise standards. In January, responsibility was allocated to a recently appointed member of staff who has the necessary experience and a clear vision for the development of the subject. She has already impacted positively on the planning and provision. The local confederation of small schools has been successful in appointing a specialist teacher who will teach, for one day a week, in the school. Finally a new suite of computers has been installed and therefore the school is in a strong position to raise standards in the immediate future.
136. Pupils at Key Stage 1 have very limited access to the new computers, although plans are in hand to install one in the classroom immediately after the inspection. Pupils were observed using an old, but nevertheless relevant, program in a mathematics lesson, and they were confident as they used the cursor to move a figure across the screen in search of 'buried treasure' using instructions that reinforced learning on direction and movement taught previously. On the wall were copies of e-mails received from a former pupil.
137. A group of Key Stage 2 pupils were working with the newly appointed specialist teacher and they constructed 'flexi trees' decision lines. They worked confidently and collaborated well. Other pupils from Class 3 were observed writing letters to pupils in Budleigh Salterton School which they would send via email. They set the letters out well, but are at an early stage of skill development, not being sure how to save the letters on the hard drive. Analysis of work shows that children in the reception class use the computer to label pictures and to play games that improve their keyboard skills. Pupils in Class 4 had been taught the basic skills of 'booting up' the computer, word processing, how to use correctly several of the facilities on the tool bar and how to save on to disc. They can also use 'search engines' on the Internet to assist them in researching information.
138. The newly appointed co-ordinator has adopted national guidelines for information and communication technology and assessment sheets produced by the local authority to use in conjunction with this. She runs a popular computer club that enables pupils from one class each term to attend. She has limited non-contact time and has yet to monitor teaching in this area of the curriculum. The newly-appointed information and communication technology teacher has nearly completed the writing of a revised scheme of work to guide his work in the school and has also written a skills profile that will be presented to the school for adoption. Staff are all receiving additional training in the use of information and communication technology.

MUSIC

139. Only one music lesson was observed during the inspection and this involved little active participation on the part of Year 5 and 6 pupils. No judgement can therefore be made on standards of music at either key stage. Pupils generally sing tunefully and enthusiastically in assemblies and hymn practice.
140. The school has recently adopted national guidelines a framework for the development of musical skills throughout the school and supplements this with specially produced television programmes which are used as a stimulus for pupils' more active participation. In this way most aspects of the curriculum are covered, including composition.
141. Visiting musicians, including the Somerset music team and an African drummer, add increased vitality to the music provision and peripatetic instrumental teachers provide individual music tuition for a small number of pupils.
142. Christmas and other festivals provide a focus for whole-school productions and are well supported by the village as a whole. Children sing to local elderly people and take part in a local musical festival at the Octagon Theatre in Yeovil. Maypole and Morris dancing ensure further participation in the life of the community.
143. The recently appointed co-ordinator provides enthusiastic leadership of the subject but has yet to monitor teaching throughout the school. Resources are good, and include a wide range of recorded music. Links have been established with the music department of the local comprehensive school who have loaned instruments. Funding has been established for sharing a musician in residence with a group of other small schools in the area.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

144. During the week of the inspection it was possible to observe only one aspect of the physical education programme, and this was a joint games session for reception and Key Stage 1 pupils. It is, therefore, not possible to make any overall judgements about standards of attainment or the quality of teaching.
145. The lesson observed involved a wide age range (four to seven years) and took place on the school field approximately 150 metres from the main school. Pupils walked sensibly and safely to the field with their teachers where, after a brief warm-up session, the lesson focused on throwing accurately and bat and ball skills, the pupils getting into four groups and playing a game of cricket towards the end of the lesson. Whilst this was a suitable activity for the older pupils in the group it was not suitable for the youngest whose levels of co-ordination were not sufficiently developed to cope effectively with the demands made upon them.
146. The co-ordinator who, until last year taught all physical education lessons in the school, is well organised, knowledgeable and enthusiastic about this subject. She has introduced national guidelines to support her Key Stage 2 colleagues and uses comprehensive and suitable materials to support her own planning. Athletics, netball and football clubs supplement the physical education programme, and pupils have the opportunity to swim at a pool in a nearby town. The village hall is used effectively for gymnastics, dance and lessons involving apparatus. Resources are satisfactory and the co-ordinator has a small budget to replace small equipment as and when necessary.