

INSPECTION REPORT

SHEPTON BEAUCHAMP CE FIRST SCHOOL

Iminster, Somerset

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123773

Headteacher: Elizabeth Frazer

Reporting inspector: Deborah Zachary
2940

Dates of inspection: 28-30 January 2002

Inspection number: 195508

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Shepton Beauchamp Ilminster Somerset
Postcode:	TA19 0LQ
Telephone number:	01460 240793
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Derek Farr
Date of previous inspection:	12 th May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2940	Deborah Zachary	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Physical education Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9756	Ken Parsons	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23999	Catherine Davey	Team inspector	English Art and design Geography History Music Religious education Foundation stage curriculum Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Shepton Beauchamp C of E First School is small, with 62 pupils on roll. There are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls, but no pupils are from ethnic minorities and none speak English as an additional language. Over the last few years, pupils have entered the school with a range of attainment that is average or slightly above average compared to the national picture. The current pupils in Year R (reception) entered with average attainment overall. There are few pupils with special educational needs and none with a Statement of Special Educational Need. There are no pupils taking free school meals, and a majority of the children come from comparatively advantaged economic backgrounds.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school that gives good value for money despite its comparatively high costs. It has some exceptional teaching, and as a result some exceptional standards. The other reason the pupils learn so well is the way the whole ethos of the school supports their learning. The importance of the individual permeates everything the school does. The school is very well led and had already identified the main point for improvement the inspectors found. This point is only identified for improvement in comparison to the strength the school has in other areas.

What the school does well

- Standards are very high by the time pupils leave the school because of the high quality of teaching.
- The whole ethos of the school leads to excellent relationships and very good behaviour.
- Pupils show very good initiative and drive their own learning forward.
- Pupils receive a very good start in reception where they are helped to settle very well.
- The school is very well led by the headteacher.
- Lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs achieve particularly well, and the school is very good at catering for the needs of most individual pupils.

What could be improved

- The highest attainers in Years 3 and 4 make satisfactory progress in mathematics, but it is not as good as the good or very good progress they make in other subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION (October 1997)

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have significantly improved in every subject. Teaching has improved dramatically especially in Year R. The previous inspection criticized a lack of independent learning and selection of resources by pupils. That independence and the pupils' great inventiveness are now huge assets. National Curriculum requirements are now fully met, and information and communication technology has greatly improved. The school improvement plan is much better than that described at the time of the last inspection. Management roles are better defined and all teachers are involved in co-ordination of subjects. This improvement is satisfactory but the teachers are not yet taking full subject management roles.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	A	A	A	A
writing	A	A*	A*	A*
mathematics	A	A*	A	A

Key	
In the highest 5% of schools nationally	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The table shows that results have remained very high for the last three years.

Inspectors make two key judgements to do with how well pupils are doing academically. When they refer to 'standards' they mean how well pupils are doing compared to others of the same age nationally. The other judgement, 'achievement', is like 'progress', a judgement about whether the standards are high enough for the particular pupils involved, given their starting points.

The children in Year R achieve at least well in all areas of the curriculum, and very well in personal and social development. By Year 1, their range of attainment is above average in all areas of learning.

The standards in the current Year 2 are similar to the results in the table above and are well above average overall. Standards in the separate individual subjects are at least above average, and well above in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and art and design. Achievement is very good overall through Years 1 to 2.

Though achievement is good in the upper part of the school it is not so uniformly good as in Years 1 and 2. It is very good in some subjects such as art and design and English. It is satisfactory in mathematics and physical education – in the latter the accommodation holds back better achievement. High attainers could do better in their arithmetic, but lower attaining pupils do well in all areas of mathematics. Nevertheless, standards are very high overall and are particularly high in English and science.

The school does very well with the lower attaining pupils. Those with special educational needs achieve very well, many reaching standards that are average for their age by the time they leave. High attainers and gifted and talented pupils are well challenged in most of their work. As a result these pupils reach very high standards in several subjects. There is no significant difference between the standards of boys and girls.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good and enhance the rate at which they learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. It is very good all around the school, not just in lessons. Pupils are polite and are careful of others' property, treating it as their own.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' very good behaviour is not at the expense of initiative. Pupils reflect on their work and consider other angles, thanks to the encouragement of their teachers. Relationships are exceptionally good at all levels.
Attendance	Above average.

There is an atmosphere of mutual respect in the school in which all contributions, of whatever level, are valued. Pupils of different ages play together in the playground and boys and girls sit and work together naturally. All pupils are included by the school and include themselves in the ethos of the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	very good	excellent	very 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.

The quality of teaching of English and of literacy is very good overall. The teaching of mathematics and of numeracy is good overall, very good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 and 4.

Overall the school meets the needs of its pupils very well indeed, and they learn very well. Pupils with special educational needs are very well taught and they receive sensitive support. The gifted and talented are well challenged in most of their work. Teachers know their pupils very well and almost all the teaching is well targeted at what an individual needs to learn next. This means that the pupils build very effectively on what they already know. The support staff make an immense contribution to the school’s success.

Among the many great teaching strengths are the variety of activities found in most lessons and the excellent use of time and resources. This keeps the interest and pace of learning very high. Some of the teaching is inspirational. The whole ethos of the school is such that pupils enter lessons expecting to learn quickly and enjoy themselves. All the teachers have subjects in which they are particularly strong. Their confidence then results in excellent question and answer sessions with the pupils and in really challenging work.

The only area for improvement in teaching is teachers’ expectations of the oldest higher attainers in mathematics. They are not high enough because the teachers lack confidence in setting the highest level work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Wide and of good quality. Well planned. Meets statutory requirements. Good supplemental activities like visits out and visiting teachers.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Realistic plans and individual support.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provides very well for pupils’ personal and social education and their spiritual, social and moral development. Provides well for developing pupils’ understanding of local and traditional British culture, and satisfactorily for their understanding of multicultural Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. Good assessment. Very good atmosphere and day to day care. Some health and safety procedures not formalised.

The school has a strong relationship with parents and provides them with good quality information. The contribution of parents to the school and their children’s learning is good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads and manages the school very well. The staff share her commitment to improvement. Management of the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers with particular expertise in specific subjects support colleagues but do not yet observe them in class to help them analyse what is happening.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	They give a satisfactory strategic lead and are very supportive of the school. There have been many recent changes to personnel and their expertise is still developing.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Staff are fully involved in planning and evaluation. The headteacher judges the pace of change well. Statistics are appropriately analysed.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory financial planning, control and use of grants. Best value principles appropriately applied.

Staffing levels are very good and the staff contribute well to the high standards pupils reach. Resources are satisfactory. There is some money available this year to further improve them, e.g. in information and communication technology. The accommodation is now satisfactory for the delivery of the National Curriculum, though it is still cramped. Staff work hard to overcome its limitations, and pupils achieve satisfactorily in physical education.

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 children like school. • Teaching is good and children make good progress. • Behaviour is good and the children are helped to be mature. • The school is well led and they feel comfortable approaching it with questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extra curricular activities • Homework • Information about progress

The inspection team agreed with the many positive comments made by parents. They largely disagreed with the negative views. The range of extra curricular activities offered is very good for a first school. Parents' concerns about homework were that it was too much or too little (this varied) and that it was not consistent. However, the homework is at an appropriate level for a first school. Pupils in Year 1 in the two different classes are offered the same opportunities to work at home. Information as a whole about progress, including meetings, is good but there is some room for improvement in annual reports. Here comments on reports are sometimes a little too general to be helpful, and some targets for pupils need to be made more specific.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

'Standards', the judgement of how well pupils are doing compared to others of the same age nationally, may be judged from national test results, or against the levels defined in the National Curriculum or the Early Learning Goals as 'expected' at certain ages. The other judgement, 'achievement', is a judgement made against pupils' starting points. The achievement judgement shows whether, long term, enough progress is being made.

1. Over the last few years, pupils have entered the school with a range of attainment that is average or slightly above average compared to the national picture. The current Year 1 are the only year group who entered the school with above average attainment overall. In general, at entry, mathematics standards and reading standards tend to be best, with standards in personal and social development and in speaking or listening not as good.
2. The children in Year R achieve well in all areas of the curriculum. They achieve very well in personal and social development, quite a feat given the newness of the school experience for them. This development lays the groundwork for pupils' very good progress later. By the time Reception pupils enter Year 1, their range of attainment is above average in all areas of learning; many in the current year group are already working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum programmes of study. They do well because they are made to feel secure and receive very good teaching. This helps them to settle very quickly into class routines, and makes them want to do well.
3. Although the number of pupils in each year group is small, the results of National Curriculum tests for Year 2 are consistent enough to be significant. Standards in writing have been the best in tests, but reading and mathematics results have been consistently high or very high. An analysis of results in terms of how many pupils reach what is expected for their age and how many do better does not show a significant variation - standards are high against both these indicators over the last few years. This analysis supports the judgement of the inspection that achievement is the same for pupils of all attainment levels. The standards in the current Year 2 fit the pattern of work that is well above average overall. Standards in the separate subjects are at least above average, and well above in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and art. Achievement is very good overall through Years 1 to 2, at least good in all subject areas. This is primarily due to excellent teaching. Standards have significantly improved in almost every subject since the last inspection.
4. The current Year 4 and last year's Year 4 entered Year 3 with results in National Curriculum tests that were well above average, and in some areas very high. That sort of level of entry poses a very big challenge to teachers. Overall, however, pupils' standards when they leave are very high compared to the national picture and their achievement is good in the upper part of the school. Their achievement is not so uniformly good as in Years 1 and 2. It is very good in some subjects such as art and design and English. It is satisfactory rather than good in mathematics and physical education. The accommodation limits achievement in physical education; though teaching is good, the facilities do not help the pupils' concentration. Mathematics is a subject in which the work set must be very finely tuned to keep progress very rapid. In mathematics the lower attaining pupils continue to do well, but the progress of the highest attainers, whilst still adequate, is not as rapid as before. However, there was plenty of evidence during the inspection that gifted and talented pupils, of whom the school has a significant number, are well challenged in most of their work. As a result these pupils reach very high standards in several subjects. The year taken as a whole reach very high standards in the key subjects of English and science. They reach standards that are well above average in mathematics, information and communication technology and art. Their standards are above average in the other subjects, and have improved significantly in every subject area since the last inspection.

5. The school does very well with the lower attaining pupils. Those with special educational needs are identified quickly and given individual support. They achieve very well, many reaching standards that would be average for their age. This is because the school has very good procedures in place, which clearly identify what pupils need to do next in order to improve. Small achievable targets are set, which pupils and parents know about, and highly skilled staff work as a very effective team both in and out of the classroom, to ensure that pupils achieve them. This early intervention enables pupils to be removed from the special needs register because their specific needs are promptly acted upon.
6. High English standards are well promoted throughout the school. In Years R, 1 and 2 the staff work particularly hard to develop speaking and listening skills, which is a weaker area at the start. They question and involve pupils skilfully, always careful to develop vocabulary. As a result, the pupils' command of language and their confidence in using it are growing very rapidly. In Year R they develop the confidence to speak to all the class at once. By Year 2 they are willing to offer opinions to the class unprompted. By Year 4 they explain the considered reasons for opinions, again as a matter of course. Literacy is equally strong. By the time pupils enter Year 1 they are reading simple books accurately and writing simple sentences unaided. By the end of Year 2 pupils read a wide range of books confidently and accurately and express opinions about what they have read. They write for a very extensive range of purposes and produce lovely neat work, using a joined, legible style. By Year 4 pupils are very fluent readers and confidently refer to what they have read to explain their ideas, Spelling is of a very high standard, and pupils are using complex sentences and a wide vocabulary to express their ideas.
7. The development of mathematical and numeracy skills is good overall. By the end of Year R the children have a secure knowledge of the day, date and month, and make accurate calculations about the number of days between given dates, although not all recognise odd and even numbers securely. This is rapidly remedied in Year 1. By Year 2 all pupils are able understand that that a multiple of two ends in an even number – they have a good recall of simple times tables. Times tables, however, are not fluent enough for the most talented pupils in Year 4, and this is an area for development. One reason for this is that the oral and mental sessions in the lessons are sometimes too easy for them. They reach higher standards in other aspects of mathematics, for example in their understanding of probability.
8. Science skills are well built up from the earliest age. Standards are equally high in all areas. Pupils gain understanding in Year R through practical activities such as testing the strength of a bridge with toy animals. As pupils move through the school they continue to do very well because teachers develop pupils' understanding and investigating skills in an integrated way, but do teach new areas more formally when needed. As a result pupils learn to think independently and link their ideas to their own scientific knowledge. By the time they leave the school in Year 4 they are always questioning 'why?' They are able to understand connections between facts as well as the facts themselves, and this enables many to reach very high standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and maturity are a strength of the school. These characteristics enhance learning in almost every lesson. Behaviour is very good, but the pupils are not too quiet to take part in lessons. The previous inspection praised attitudes and behaviour but criticized a lack of independence in pupils. That independence and their great inventiveness are now huge assets. They have learnt to reflect on their work and consider other angles, thanks to the encouragement of their teachers, and this in itself gives them wide ranging learning. The scene is set in Year R. Here the children say 'Please' and 'Thank you' unprompted and help to keep the classroom tidy. They applaud each other and concentrate for considerable lengths of time because they want to do well. Relationships are exceptionally good at all levels of the school. All adults are respected by the pupils, and they respect and help each other. The pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is well above average. They are punctual in their return to lessons after play.

10. Attitudes are very good. There were numerous examples of pupils absolutely engrossed by their lessons during the inspection. In a Year 1 and 2 science lesson a teacher found a wind up toy, part of a very cleverly constructed book, which she used spontaneously to demonstrate that toys did not have to be powered by electricity. The pupils watched intently as the little toy wound its way through the pages, and then the concentration was momentarily interrupted by a quiet cry of 'Oh cool!' Pupils of all levels of attainment become involved rapidly in lessons, and both boys and girls participate well in what the school offers. A large number of both boys and girls participate in the after school recorder club, for instance.
11. Pupils' behaviour is very good all around the school, not just in lessons. They are polite and offer help to visitors. They are careful of school property, treating it as their own. Even when concentration is not as strong as usual, as in a Year 3 and 4 physical education lesson, it only takes a word from the teacher to calm them down. Bullying is not an issue in the school and there have been no exclusions in the last year. Parents commented on the pupils' high standards of behaviour at the parents' meeting.
12. The excellent relationships that flourish between pupils and between pupils and staff flourish in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The teachers model this respect in the way they encourage pupils to contribute, and the pupils show that they respect each other's contributions, of whatever level. There were a variety of occasions during the inspection when they applauded the work of another pupil spontaneously. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated. Pupils of different ages play together in the playground and boys and girls sit and work together naturally.
13. The pupils' personal development is also exceptionally high. They frequently lead prayers in classes at the end of the day, doing so with stillness yet naturalness. They then lead the 'Good afternoon' to the class and are answered by the others. The pupils display good control. Even the younger pupils fully understand that not everyone can have a turn, and despite great excitement watch others being chosen to demonstrate. The older pupils demonstrate a high capability to reflect on what is happening. Before their residential visit to Kilve, for example, they wrote poems expressing worry about potentially missing home, but then an articulated concern that they might not want to come home afterwards! Some wrote about how the excitement made them feel extra powerful and skilful.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching in the school is high and it is the key reason that standards are so impressive. Teaching and learning are very good overall in Reception and Years 3 and 4. They are outstanding in Years 1 and 2. During the inspection the teaching in almost all lessons seen was at least good (the remainder was satisfactory). More than half was very good with more than one in seven excellent. At the time of the last inspection there was some unsatisfactory teaching and only about one third was good. This inspection's judgements are very significantly better.
15. The quality of teaching of pupils in Year R has improved dramatically compared to the judgements of the last inspection. Because all the staff know children very well, they make very good gains in learning, and all have equal access to the curriculum. Exciting activities, which motivate and inspire children, make them eager to participate, and the clever way in which activities are linked to other areas of the curriculum means that time is used to maximum effect. The teacher and classroom assistants make a very effective team, and the excellent relationships that exist between staff and children are a credit to the school.
16. Overall the school meets the needs of its pupils very well. Pupils with special educational needs are very well taught, both in class and when they are withdrawn for small group lessons. Very good support during a withdrawal session enabled one pupil to correctly identify the vowels and consonants needed to make simple three letter words. Much praise and encouragement considerably boosted his confidence and made him persevere until he succeeded. The particular requirements of pupils with special educational needs and those of the gifted and talented are seldom identified in whole class lesson plans, but in practice the work they do is well pitched and the pupils with special educational needs receive sensitive support. Teachers know their pupils

very well and keep detailed records of their progress. This means that almost all the teaching is well targeted at what an individual needs to learn next. The teachers use individual questioning well to challenge pupils, but also sometimes give them work individually tailored to their needs. This means that the pupils learn in a coherent way, helped to build very effectively on what they already know. The support staff work well with small groups and individuals in the same way. They also use their initiative to intervene effectively to help individuals in whole class sessions. The school has comparatively high numbers of support staff, but they make an immense contribution to its success.

17. An overall judgement of teaching could not be made in every subject, because not all subjects were being taught to all classes on the inspection days. However, of the subjects for which teaching judgements were made, the biggest strengths are in English, in science, and in mathematics for Years 1 and 2. The teaching of music and physical education is good. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4.
18. The quality of teaching of English and of literacy is very good overall. Teachers ensure that all pupils have a very high level of challenge, suited to their individual needs. The variety of activities found in most lessons and the excellent use of time, resources and staff in lessons are key features that ensure the very good learning that frequently takes place. Teachers also make very good use of opportunities to extend and enhance literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum.
19. In mathematics the reason for the very strong teaching lower down the school is teachers' knowledge of individual needs combined with very strong mathematical understanding. The pupils are inspired to try their very best and are challenged at just the right level. In the upper part of the school pupils are challenged satisfactorily in most aspects of mathematics and they learn well in some lessons. The lower attaining pupils have their needs met well but the teachers' expectations are not always high enough in arithmetic for the higher attainers. They are too low not because teachers do not know their pupils well, but because they lack confidence with the subject. This means that the ablest pupils do not move on enough in their knowledge and skills. The teaching of numeracy is good overall, however, because of the excellent work in some classes, the way it is reinforced in a variety of curriculum subjects, and the good work with all but the highest attainers.
20. Teachers use information and communication technology effectively when appropriate. They teach the necessary skills and give opportunities for pupils to use the computers to enhance learning in other subjects. As a result the pupils learn to understand how information and communication technology simplifies tasks. Resources were enhanced at the time of the inspection by the use of laptops jointly owned by other local first schools. This enabled the whole Year 3 and 4 class to use computers at the same time, which was an advantage. However, the standards being reached in the subject show that the pupils are not disadvantaged by primarily using computers in pairs separately from the rest.
21. The whole ethos of the school is such that pupils enter lessons expecting to learn. Even when the pupils are tired, relationships are such that the teachers manage discipline unobtrusively. This whole approach creates a climate in which teaching and learning can flourish. However, the pupils are not passive learners. Behaviour is very good but the teachers encourage full participation and initiative. They pick up and value what pupils say, so that pupils are willing to hazard guesses. They understand what they are trying to do in a lesson and commit their efforts wholeheartedly. In a very good science lesson with Year 3 and 4 the teacher was confident enough to draw the lesson on using the pupils' ideas. She steered the discussion by reminding 'I want to come back to something X said..' in order to introduce the important concept of the nature of the surface affecting friction.
22. All the teachers have subjects in which they are particularly strong. Their confidence then results in excellent question and answer sessions with the pupils and in really challenging work. In an excellent Year 3 and 4 history lesson the teacher made absolutely sure that the pupils understood the question while developing their vocabulary extensively. The teacher's breadth of knowledge and the way the interchanges were handled made learning highly exciting and the

pupils put outstanding efforts into their work. The pupils have learnt to love the challenge. In an excellent Year 1 and 2 mathematics lesson one called out 'make it hard!' in excitement before a class mental arithmetic session. Questions and answers in class are usually very well used to assess pupils' understanding. Marking is conscientiously used, with work corrected and some examples of comments that challenge the pupils or give them individual feedback.

23. The teachers ensure lessons are interesting by very well prepared resources, often imaginatively used and very effective in ensuring full concentration. They also structure lessons well with a good variety of activities. In an excellent Year R and 1 music lesson, there was a very well thought through structure in which pupils moved from clapping to playing via a discussion of the materials of which instruments were made. The teacher ensured continuous challenge and the pace of learning was excellent. The teachers understand the importance of physical activity as a way of learning for the youngest children. One effective mathematics lesson started with them jumping to and fro outside on the number snake.
24. On the questionnaires a number of parents raised concerns about homework. However, the homework is at the right level for a first school. It is used to develop reading and spelling in the lower years with more subjects covered as pupils get older. Pupils in Year 1 in the two different classes are appropriately offered the same sort of work at home.

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

25. The school provides a wide curriculum of good quality. Although the governing body has agreed that teachers do not have to follow the letter of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, because standards are high, in practice there is little deviation. The literacy provision is very good and that for numeracy is good; numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology are reinforced in a variety of different subjects. National Curriculum requirements are now fully met. At the time of the last inspection there were weaknesses in physical education and information and communication technology; these have now been put right. English and information and communication technology receive an above average amount of curriculum time; this pays dividends in terms of high standards.
26. At the time of the inspection four pupils were on Stage 2 or 3 of the special needs register, i.e. identified as having needs that must be met by special plans. Their individual education plans have realistic targets. These are regularly updated, with the full involvement of parents and outside agencies. Highly skilled support staff work closely with teachers to ensure that targets are fully met. The very good quality of support for these pupils means that they achieve very well. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language in the school. However, the headteacher has a good understanding of the provision that would be necessary should such pupils arrive in the future.
27. There is a sound system for a planned rotation of topics for Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4. This ensures that pupils in mixed age classes do not repeat areas already studied. What is actually taught is then sensibly drawn largely from units of works produced nationally. The school provides a rich, well-planned curriculum in the Foundation Stage that takes careful account of national guidelines for the children. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The different areas of learning are taught in an integrated way, and the children are encouraged to learn through play as well as more formally. The curriculum in physical development is constrained by the accommodation in that outside activity is dependent on the weather. There is not enough storage space for large climbing apparatus, or wheeled toys. The teachers make up for these restrictions with imaginative use of alternatives, for example benches for balancing and control and the use of the village hall. Standards in physical development (i.e. physical education in Year R) are not reduced by the limitations of the accommodation.
28. As well as the statutory subjects the school also provides very well for pupils' personal and social education. Much of this is informal as the teachers take opportunities for discussion very well as they arise. Other parts are planned – in 'circle time' or as part of science or religious education.

Sex, drugs and health education are also tackled as part of the curriculum in these two subjects. The curriculum is supported by carefully planned supplemental activities. These include visits to places of interest in history and geography, and visits by specialist sports teachers. Extra curricular activities allow pupils the chance to extend special interests. The range of activities offered is very good for a first school. Both boys and girls participate, as do pupils of different abilities and ages.

29. The school is central to its local community and plays an important part in its life. In return, the community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Links with the church are particularly close, with the local vicar coming into school regularly and a member of the church – also a school governor – taking an assembly once a week. The school attends the church to celebrate special occasions such as harvest festival and Christmas. In addition, the church helps the school inform the wider community of school activities through the parish magazine and display boards in church, as well as allowing use of the rectory grounds for country dancing. Members of the community come into school to help support the curriculum. A particularly thoughtful gift to the school is a delightful relief in the playground of a sheep, the school's badge, with various types of grass planted around it, a gift from a major company in the area.
30. The school's relationships with its partner educational institutions are very good. In particular, liaison with the pre-school group in the village is productive, ensuring that children get a very good start to formal education when they transfer. Early years staff and the headteacher meet with the playgroup on a regular basis. Similarly, at the other end of their first school education, pupils benefit from the good links with the local middle school, which provide them with a well-planned transition.
31. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual development. The school's collective worship policy encourages the inclusion of a spiritual element through activities such as prayer, reflection and the lighting of a candle. Acts of collective worship are held daily and within them the school addresses a variety of spiritual and moral themes. The saying of grace before lunch and prayers just before the end of the school day are additional opportunities for a short period of reflection amidst the bustle of school life. At the end of the day, one class had a time for reflection, where they were encouraged to think something good about themselves and others. Staff are very adept at taking opportunities in lessons to address spiritual themes, with many examples seen across a range of subjects where pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own achievements and those of others. In art and design, pupils explored the feelings associated with works by artists such as Monet and Lowry. Older pupils were encouraged to analyse their feelings about the visit to Kilve Court. Early years pupils showed awe and wonder at a demonstration of magnets in a science lesson, highlighting how spiritual values can come through in a wide variety of subjects.
32. The school's very effective provision for moral development is based on clear values, linked to respect and care for the individual, which are shared by pupils, teachers and parents alike. Teachers provide pupils with very good examples of hard work, care and consideration for others, often taking great pains to help pupils when they need support with some aspect of their work. The school has clear expectations and effective strategies for promoting good behaviour, firmly established in a moral code. Pupils understand right from wrong, and are aware of the consequences of their actions. Assemblies make an important contribution to the development of pupils' moral awareness. Pupils are given good opportunities to explore moral issues in a well-planned programme of personal and social education, whilst in religious education they explore, for example, the good and bad elements in the story of Noah. The school provides a positive focus to caring for others through fund raising for a range of charities. There are opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in lessons, and they carry out such tasks as tidying away sensibly and willingly.
33. The school's very good provision for pupils' social development is reflected in harmonious relationships among pupils, and between them and their teachers. Pupils regard the school as a friendly place and feel safe. There are many extra-curricular activities, which are well supported by the pupils. Pupils form very good relationships in lessons, with many good opportunities to

develop their social skills of collaborative working and listening to the contributions of others in discussion. There is a strong emphasis on social development in the programme of personal and social education, and teachers are aware of pupils' individual social as well as academic progress and achievements.

34. The school's cultural provision is satisfactory, but it is better at developing pupils' understanding of local and traditional British culture than their understanding of multicultural Britain. Pupils have interesting opportunities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of music, art, drama and dance. Elements of their own local culture are encouraged and celebrated, an unusual feature being egg shackling, an ancient local tradition held on Shrove Tuesday. The school also teaches traditional skipping rhymes in the playground, a long-established aspect of childhood that has died out in so many places. Pupils perform country-dances at the church fair every year. Wider culture is encouraged by their work in music and art, where they study the work of English and other European artists. Pupils develop an awareness of major world faiths and events through religious education. There are other opportunities to experience elements of other cultures. In a dance lesson, for example, Indian music and hand movements were introduced in a natural manner. Pupils have studied aboriginal art from Australia. One teacher in the school has contacts with a school in Kenya, which has provided a natural way of helping pupils to understand another society. The school is sensitive to the fact that its pupils are all of white origin, and is reflecting on ways it can further enhance their understanding of multicultural Britain. This aspect of the school's work is satisfactory, and needs further development to bring it to the level of other good or very good provision.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The headteacher and all members of staff make good provision for the care and welfare of their pupils. The school has good child protection procedures in accord with local guidelines. The governors and headteacher are active in ensuring that health and safety procedures are in place and followed, although they do need to ensure that their current plans for more formal risk assessments are fully implemented. The size of the school, coupled with small class sizes and a stable staff, means that the adults do know individual pupils well. Staff are genuinely concerned to help pupils when they need it, and do their best to resolve any problems they have. This support allows pupils to concentrate on their learning, and they feel safe and valued. This in turn allows them to achieve to the best of their ability. The school's high standards of supporting pupils have been maintained since the last inspection.
36. The school places particular emphasis on pupils' emotional development, "an emphasis on building their confidence without destroying their ability to be children", as the headteacher expresses it. A strong learning ethos permeates the school, which means that in some areas there is less need for formalised procedures than in a larger or less personal school. Shepton Beauchamp School has a strong sense of community, and the strength of communities is that they do not work just through formal rules.
37. One example of this is the good arrangements to monitor and promote pupils' behaviour. They do not only consist of formal procedures such as rules, rewards and sanctions. Rather, they take the form of a general unspoken consensus throughout the school that there is a natural way to behave, and that pupils will conform to it. This expectation and ethos is strong and is established right from the foundation stage; it permeates the school. The use of overt reward or sanction is very limited. Good work or behaviour can earn a smiley face, ten of which lead to a certificate celebrated in an assembly. There is also a cup awarded to a class for lining up the best when coming into school from the playground. The self-discipline the school instils is something that pupils can take with them into middle school and later life, when more formal controls have been long forgotten. All staff are constantly reinforcing the school's expectations, including teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors. This picture also holds in the way the school prevents oppressive behaviour. Pupils know that this is not acceptable and so, usually, they do not behave that way. A discussion with the headteacher is usually sufficient to nip problems in the bud, although procedures do exist should issues develop further. Usually the school community works together and does not allow such tensions to develop.

38. Procedures to promote good attendance are satisfactory and sufficient for the circumstances of this school, where pupils are keen to attend. Parents are aware of the school's expectations and procedures.
39. The good procedures for assessment are carefully implemented, and have improved considerably since the last inspection. The children are assessed when they enter the school ('baseline' assessment) and very careful use is made of the results of this. Teachers very quickly gain a detailed working knowledge of what individuals can do. The children's progress is carefully recorded as they move towards the early learning goals, although dating of these records would give a clearer indication of the rate at which they are progressing. The attractive portfolios which contain examples of work give a very clear indication of how well the children have done from the time they enter school.
40. As pupils start the National Curriculum, detailed records are kept for English, mathematics and science, and useful comments are made on pupils' progress in other subjects, often topic by topic. These are used effectively to tell teachers where a pupil has not understood something and often what needs to be done next. In mathematics, though pupils who do not understand something are picked up by this system, harder work for those older and higher attaining pupils who may always get work right is not always identified. Both class and individual targets are set, with the involvement of pupils and parents, and school and national test results are analysed carefully. For example, the school modified writing tasks to better suit both boys and girls, and the range and quality of reading material for boys was also extended as a result of analysis. Now, boys are as involved and interested in their reading as girls in the school. Samples of pupils' writing are saved regularly from the time they start school, and are carefully graded against National Curriculum levels. This could usefully be modified to include examples of work within each level, and maybe extended to enhance teachers' awareness of higher levels in mathematics. The school compares pupils' written work with that of a similar school in the area, in order to better measure standards. The workload for assessment is high, and thought could usefully be given to ways by which assessment procedures might be made more manageable.
41. Very good procedures for the early identification and support of pupils with special educational needs are in place. Pupils are identified from baseline assessment results soon after they start school. The school then introduces its own well-documented schemes for assessment; this is used very effectively to set small achievable targets. Very careful tracking of progress and targeting of work enables some pupils with learning difficulties to catch up with the rest of their peers, and consequently, they can be removed from the special needs register.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The school has a strong relationship with parents and provides them with good quality information. A significant proportion of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire or attended the meeting with inspectors, and of these nearly all were positive about all aspects of the school. This demonstrates that the school is well supported, as it was at the time of the last inspection. In particular, parents believe that their children like school, that the teaching is good and that their children work hard and make good progress. They endorse the standards of behaviour and think the school helps children to become mature and responsible. There were a few criticisms about the amount of homework, the information the school provides in terms of reports and how it works with parents, and particularly the range of activities provided outside of lessons. Inspectors' findings do not support any of these concerns. Homework, including reading books, is appropriate for this age group and is regularly set. The school makes good efforts to keep parents informed and to listen to parental views. Activities taking place separately from lessons are quite extensive for a small first school, particularly bearing in mind the limitations of the site. Overall, parents' views of the school are very good and the school enjoys the confidence of all sectors of its local community.
43. The overall quality of information for parents is good. The prospectus and annual governors' report to parents are well-written documents that give a good flavour of the school. The prospectus does

need to include attendance data. The school has improved its annual reports to parents on their children's progress since the last inspection, and they now meet statutory requirements. The reports are well tailored to the individual though comments on them can sometimes be too general to be helpful, and some targets for pupils need to be made more specific. Parents' evenings are held termly, and most parents do attend them. Parents also get an opportunity to see their child's work each term. The school provides regular newsletters of good quality. Parents of pupils can come into school in the morning and settle their child, a time when teachers are available to see them. Perhaps above all, staff have built on the advantages of being a small village school so that they know the parents and the parents know them. In these circumstances, the good communication is as much about relationships between people as formal systems.

44. The contribution of parents to the school and their children's learning is good. Most parents do support their children's homework. The school communicates the homework being set well, with Year 3 and 4 pupils having formal homework diaries, and information on homework appears on the noticeboard to make doubly sure. A number of parents help in school, hearing readers or carrying out tasks such as mounting pupils' work. Parents support school policies and most have signed a home school agreement, although this has only formalised existing positive attitudes. The Friends of Shepton School (FOSS) is active in organising social and fundraising events, a particular strength being the way that these often involve the village and provide a good link with the wider community. Groups of parents willingly help in practical ways, such as erecting a shed in the playground or repainting the toilets. The parent governors make an appropriate contribution to the work of the school's governing body.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The headteacher leads and manages the school very well. She is very sensitive to the capabilities of her staff and their development. At the same time she identifies the needs of the school with clarity and takes the school forward very effectively, despite teaching in the classroom for more than half the week. The staff share her commitment to improvement. They work very hard and with great success to reach their targets, and they ensure that the aims and values of the school are embedded in its work. Central in these aims is the concern for the individual that makes the school effectively inclusive – all groups of pupils and personnel are valued and supported. The school has shown very good improvement since the last inspection, and the only key issue from the current inspection was raised as a possibility by the school before the inspection started. There is a very high capacity to improve further.
46. The staff are fully involved by the head in planning for development. The school improvement plan is much better than that described at the time of the last inspection. It is easy to follow, with costs and success criteria indicated for each development point. Individuals have responsibilities for leading on specific targets, as appropriate to their roles. Development actions are followed through. Specific grants such as the standards fund are appropriately used. Particularly good use has been made over the last two years of funds received to improve teachers' competence with information and communication technology, for example. Results of developments are often evaluated by the staff together and the headteacher has a very good understanding of the pace of change achieved and the reasons for any delays.
47. The management of the curriculum, teaching and learning is good but could be improved. Key co-ordination roles such as the special needs co-ordinator are appropriately identified. Management of special needs is very good. The co-ordinator maintains excellent working relationships with other professionals, and teachers and classroom assistants work very effectively as a team to manage the work associated with pupils with special educational needs. This includes attendance at regular review meetings to assess pupils' progress towards their targets on individual education plans. Staff also take responsibilities for advice to others and co-ordination of support for key curriculum areas. The teachers examine pupils' work together. This has all improved since the last inspection. Monitoring of teaching is carried out by the headteacher, and this ensures that she has a good understanding of the quality of provision so can report to Governors. However, teachers with particular expertise in specific subjects provide support through discussion with colleagues rather than through more direct lesson observation and analysis. This means that a

valuable opportunity for using their expertise is under-developed. For example, though the school has now identified progress for higher attainers in mathematics as a potential area for development, specialist expertise within the school in Years 1 to 2 has not yet been drawn in to analyse what is happening in Years 3 to 4.

48. The required procedures for performance management are in place and all staff are keen to improve what they are doing, despite the high standards of teaching already reached. All staff have their individual targets, but more general professional development is agreed in relation to the school's needs. When staff attend sessions outside school they share what they have learnt effectively with the others. There have been no staff changes recently and there are no unfilled vacancies. There is no pre-planned induction programme for new staff, but the flexibility of working and general support that staff provide to each other is such that an induction programme could be drawn together with no difficulty.
49. The governing body gives a satisfactory strategic lead. Governors are very supportive of the school. They have appropriate systems in place to monitor what is happening in it. However, there have been a significant number of changes to key posts such as Chair of Governors and Chair of Finance during the last year, together with a number of new governors. This means that in some cases there is not yet a depth of knowledge available to inform the strategic overview governors must take. There is effective induction and training for new governors and a helpful handbook, and the governing body is growing in effectiveness. Statutory requirements are met in all areas except the provision of attendance data in the prospectus, though it is given in the Governors' Annual Report.
50. Financial planning is satisfactory. A large 'carry forward' (money not spent the previous year) has been a feature of recent years, because the school has been planning an extension to its administrative accommodation, now built. The 'carry forward' has dropped in the last few months, but at about seven percent of income is still high. The headteacher is aware of this and the teachers are discussing the possibilities the funds give. Though resources are currently satisfactory, the funds could be used to further expand the information and communication technology equipment, probably the area in most need. The school puts the principles of best value into practice in a satisfactory way. It ensures purchases are made through competitive suppliers. Much of the challenge and evaluation of what the school is doing is dependent on the headteacher, because of the many new governors, but governors are growing in confidence in this. Consultation with the school's community is informal but satisfactory because of the nature of the relationships between school, parents and pupils. The school compares itself with others in terms of National Curriculum Test results, but as yet only at Year 2. The possibilities for comparisons of the progress made to Year 4 are not yet put into practice. Financial data is not routinely compared to similar schools. For example, the funding spent on support staff is high, but not identified as such in any governors' analysis. In practice this funding is giving good value – both teaching and support staff numbers are high and the staff very effective - but without specific comparisons the governors do not have the data to identify this for themselves.
51. The school's day to day financial control is also satisfactory. It is largely dependent on the effectiveness of the administrative officer, but the headteacher takes an appropriate overview. The latest auditor's recommendations have been fully implemented. The use of management information systems is limited, largely because of the lack of space for computer screens even with the extension. Now that the extension is built the school is considering the possible purchase of an additional laptop to enhance the opportunities the headteacher has for using information technology to support her role. The headteacher is aware of a number of over-bureaucratic demands on her two days a week office time. She reports that sometimes the complex format of national or county documents extends reading time unnecessarily, or circulars covering too many things impede data storage; some communications from outside organizations are still unnecessarily paper-based rather than electronic; also, even where they are electronic (for example, the interactive Excel file carrying data about the school's results for analysis), faults can make the exercise time-consuming.

52. The accommodation is well maintained and attractive, thanks to the efforts of classroom staff and the caretaker. It has improved since the last inspection. The provision of a small office has improved the working conditions of the headteacher and administrative officer and the efficiency of the administration. A 'knock on' effect has been the improved storage facilities in the school as space became available – for example the settling of a central non-fiction library next to the office in the space it used to occupy. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, in that the National Curriculum can be delivered. However, it still restricts physical education in that some lessons are dependent on weather. However, because of the strategies the school has developed for ensuring provision is in place, the pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53. The school is already doing very well. However there is one area in which teaching and achievement though adequate, are not as good as in the others. It has already been identified by the school. To further raise the already very high standards, the school should therefore raise the achievement of the most able pupils in Years 3 and 4 in mathematics. This should be done by:

- raising teachers' expectations of what the highest attainers can do;
- improving the pace and challenge of some of the oral and mental sessions in mathematics lessons;
- using the mathematical expertise already in the school to analyse lessons and advise teachers; and
- helping teachers to become more aware of the nature of attainment at levels 4 and 5 of the mathematics National Curriculum, perhaps through developing some examples of moderated work at the different levels.

(References to this issue may be found in paragraphs 4, 7, 19, 40, 47, 75 and 76.)

54. In addition, the report identifies some minor points that, again in the context of the school's high effectiveness, the governors may wish to include in their post-inspection action plan. These are to do with:

- The prospectus (paragraph 43)
- Risk assessments (paragraph 35)
- Provision for multicultural education (paragraph 34)
- Reports (paragraph 43)
- Observation of lessons (paragraph 47)
- Financial planning (paragraphs 50 and 97)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	27
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	11	10	2	0	0	0
Percentage	15	40	37	7	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points. The percentages do not add up to 100 because they have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	62
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6

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	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	4	9	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	12	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (94)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	13	13	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (94)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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	62
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-Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2
Average class size	20.7

Education support staff: YR-Y4

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	57

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	165,424
Total expenditure	165,930
Expenditure per pupil	2,305
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,135

Balance carried forward to next year	21,629
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	62
Number of questionnaires returned	36

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	33	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	28	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	58	42	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	39	14	3	8
The teaching is good.	83	17	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	53	8	11	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	33	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	86	14	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	39	47	11	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	69	28	3	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	30	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	42	22	14	3

Other issues raised by parents

The following additional points were made by more than one parent, either at the parents meeting or in questionnaire returns:

- Many wrote or spoke of their thanks and appreciation of the staff - for their hard work and their pastoral care.
- Some wanted more details in reports of how their child was doing against the national picture.
- Not all were clear about how much homework their child should be doing; some said Year 1 homework was different in different classes. A few felt there was too much homework.
- Some were concerned over lack of swimming provision.
- Some felt the school does not explore other cultures or different perspectives enough.

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

55. The children in Year R are in the 'Foundation Stage' at the school. Provision for them has improved considerably since the last inspection. The school provides a rich, well-planned curriculum for them that takes careful account of national guidelines. This, together with the high quality of teaching, enables all children, including those with special educational needs and the higher attainers, to achieve well in all areas of the curriculum. They achieve particularly well in personal and social development. The children start school at the beginning of the year in which they have their fifth birthday. They become full-time as the term progresses. At the time of the inspection, eight children were accommodated in a mixed class, which also contained pupils in Year 1. Most children have experienced some sort of pre-school provision. Excellent induction procedures include home/school assessments, and parental visits, as well as very close liaison with pre-school groups. These, together with the excellent quality of relationships that exist within the school, mean that the children soon feel secure. This enables them to settle very quickly into class routines, and provides a highly motivating environment, which is conducive to very good learning.
56. The most recent results of baseline assessment shows that this year the children in Year R entered school with a broadly average range of levels of attainment, although speaking and listening skills, and personal, social and emotional development, were slightly below average for the cohort as a whole. Nevertheless, a significant minority of pupils enter school with above average skills in reading, writing and mathematics. All children make good progress, regardless of their standards when they entered the school. By the time they enter Year 1, the range of attainment is above average in all areas of learning, and many are already working within Level 1 of the National Curriculum programmes of study.
57. Very careful use is made of baseline assessment and clear achievable targets are set. The children's progress is carefully recorded as they achieve the early learning goals, although dating of these records would give a clearer indication of the rate at which the children are gaining new skills. Examples of the children's written work are carefully saved in attractive portfolios. These give a very clear indication of how well the children are doing from the time they enter school to when they leave. Excellent use is made of the limited accommodation and the children's work is highly valued and carefully displayed. Consequently the classroom provides a rich learning environment where all can thrive happily.

Personal, social and emotional development

58. The children develop their personal, social and emotional skills in a variety of ways. They are successfully encouraged to dress and undress themselves in physical education lessons, and consider others by leaving their clothes in a tidy pile. They say 'please' and 'thank you' unprompted because teachers expect it, and because they are very carefully taught to value and respect others' efforts, they applaud spontaneously when other children receive merit stars. The children help to keep the classroom tidy by setting out and putting away equipment, and independently select materials for their animal sculptures. Teaching and learning is very good. The teacher has very high expectations, and places very high value on the children's contributions. Consequently the children concentrate for considerable lengths of time because they want to do well. The children's enthusiasm for learning is clearly evident because the teacher makes learning fun. As an example, the children took great delight in singing softly then loudly by watching the teacher's actions and amusing facial expressions during a lesson aimed at their creative development. In learning to take care of things around them the children take it in turns to care for their classroom toy dog. As one child remarked, "Oh dear we haven't spoken to Fred today!"

Communication, language and literacy

59. The quality of teaching is very good in the area of communication, language and literacy. As a result, the children gain new knowledge and learn new skills very quickly: learning is very good overall. The staff work very hard to develop speaking and listening skills through the use of skilful questioning and very careful explanation, and subject specific vocabulary is taught systematically. As a result, the children's command of language and their confidence in using it is growing very rapidly. Teachers sing songs and tell stories dramatically and the children often change their voices to suit characters, moods and feelings because teachers model this very well. Confidence in speaking to an audience is considerably boosted when they take it in turns to 'read' the class story. A love of books is fostered from the start, and the children can often be seen sitting quietly in the reading corner. They talk about, and correctly sequence events in, favourite stories. By the time they enter Year 1 the children read simple books accurately, know a significant number of key words, and use their very well taught phonic skills to decode others. Books are taken home regularly and realistic targets are set in home / school contact books, although parents are not yet involved in this process of target setting. The children are introduced to non-fiction books from the start, and use these to produce very attractive class books. They have many opportunities to practise writing skills. In one good lesson seen, the children found rhyming pairs of objects. The teacher then introduced words to accompany them, which the children recorded. By the time they enter Year 1, the children write simple sentences unaided and include an impressive number of frequently used words, because they take these home to learn. They form letters correctly because skills are taught well, and it is evident that the children take pride in producing neat, careful work.

Mathematical development

60. Attainment in mathematical development is above average by the time the children enter Year 1 because, again, very good teaching enables them to acquire new knowledge and skills very rapidly. The teacher rarely misses an opportunity to consolidate learning in other areas of the curriculum, and the learning is very good. During an outdoor physical activity, the children found numbers to ten on the playground snake game, then reinforced this learning by counting on and back from certain numbers. They name coins, although they do not yet know how to make the amounts in different ways. In developing their understanding of repeated patterns, they create their own to represent loud, soft, and silence when music making. Because mathematical vocabulary is taught and reinforced carefully, the children soon use words such as 'pair', 'below' and 'behind' in context. By the time they enter Year 1 the children have a secure knowledge of the day, date and month, and make accurate calculations about the number of days between given dates, although few consistently recognise odd and even numbers.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

61. The teacher is skilled in developing the children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them, so they achieve well in this area of learning. Photographic evidence shows the children selecting the materials suitable for building a bridge or The Three Billy Goats Gruff; they then tested its' strength by placing toy animals on it. In developing their understanding of history, the children sort old and new toys to make a simple time line. They plant bulbs and sow seeds to enrich their environment, and know that plants need water and light to survive. Because specific vocabulary is taught well, the children know that magnets will attract metal, but not plastic or wood. In one lesson seen, the children expressed amazement at the number of paper clips the magnet attracted. They then extended this learning by making cardboard figures, with metal attachments, move along the roadways on their simple maps. Both learning and teaching were good. The children have a secure knowledge of Bible stories and skilful questioning by the teacher enables them to identify good and bad things in peoples' lives.

Physical development

62. Although the very good quality of teaching enables the children to make very rapid gains in learning, outside activity is dependent on the weather. There is insufficient space for large

climbing apparatus, or wheeled toys, although good use is made of benches for balancing and control. As there is no school hall, the school makes maximum use of the village hall, and teachers are very adept at creating space within the classroom for physical activity, such as dance. As a result, the children demonstrate good control of their bodies and use space effectively. They are confident performers and listen to and follow instructions carefully. During a good dance lesson the children interpreted the mood of Indian music by using their hands and arms, although this was not always successful. Control of large and small balls is developing rapidly because staff frequently consolidate skills during play times.

Creative development

63. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the area of creative development, and was excellent in the music lesson observed. The children take great delight in singing songs and rhymes from memory, and often enrich them by using mime and actions. Very clever use of signs and symbols in one lesson enabled the children to modify the volume and speed of their performance. The children demonstrate good control of pencils and brushes, and incorporate considerable detail into their pictures because close observational skills are very well taught. Colour-mixing techniques are taught from the start and the children have access to a range of brush sizes. Consequently, they are increasingly able to select the tool to suit the purpose. After looking carefully at a picture entitled, 'Tropical Storm With A Tiger', the children used oil pastels to create lovely, colourful pictures in a similar style. A gifted child gave a real impression of movement by the clever positioning of the tiger in her picture.

ENGLISH

64. Pupils' attainment is well above average by the end of Year 2 and it is very high by the end of Year 4. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The results of the most recent national tests confirm the Year 2 judgement and maintain a pattern of high results over the last four years. Standards are very high by Year 4 because of the high quality of teaching throughout the school, and the carefully planned programme of work places high emphasis on the sequential teaching of skills. Another very strong contributory factor is the way in which pupils' knowledge and understanding is assessed, which tells teachers what needs to be taught next. The excellent quality of relationships means that pupils know their efforts will be highly valued and this positively encourages them to try hard because they want to do their best. Consequently pupils of all abilities learn new skills in all aspects of English very rapidly indeed. Achievement is very good throughout the school.
65. The pupils make very rapid gains in developing their speaking and listening skills. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are very keen to talk and listen to each other because very good questions by the teacher positively stimulate them to want to respond. Teachers often ask pupils for their opinions. As result they speak up in front of the class and often comment unprompted because they are confident, articulate speakers. Teachers introduce and reinforce subject specific vocabulary very carefully, and as a result pupils are very rapidly increasing their knowledge of words and how to use them. Year 1 pupils, for example, referred to their models as sculptures, then clearly described what they needed to fix them together. Teachers expect the same very high standards in other areas of the curriculum. As a result, by Year 4, pupils offer considered opinions on the merits or otherwise of invaders such as the Romans, and explain carefully why they prefer the style and techniques of certain artists.
66. By the end of Year 2 pupils read a wide range of books confidently and accurately and express opinions about what they have read and why they prefer particular types of text. They know how to find information quickly by using the contents and index pages, then use these skills to produce beautifully presented individual and class books on a wide range of topics. Pupils' love of reading is inherent because teachers read stories dramatically and books are given a prominent place both in the classroom and around the school. The excellent practice in the mixed reception/Year 1 class, whereby pupils take it in turns to read a story to the rest of the class, is a very positive boost to pupils' confidence in reading to an audience. In one such lesson a gifted pupil read dramatically and fluently, and by changing her voice to suit the characters, had the rest

of the class positively agog whilst waiting to find out what happened next. By Year 4 pupils are very fluent readers and confidently refer to what they have read to explain their ideas, when, for example, describing why the Vikings used wood in their house constructions. An excellent introduction at the beginning of one lesson positively fired pupils' enthusiasm for research, by using a wide range of sources. The teacher was very careful to structure questions so that pupils were clear about exactly what they needed to find out. As a result, pupils located and downloaded specific information from the Internet. Books are taken home regularly and targets are set for improvement, which teachers, parents and pupils know about. Although teachers make written comments about the progress pupils are making in home/school contact books, parents are not yet involved in this process.

67. The pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 shows that they are very carefully taught to use grammar and description with increasing confidence and accuracy. Examples of individual pupils' work, since entry to school, show very clearly how writing skills have developed over time. Pupils write for a very extensive range of purposes because teachers take every opportunity to extend and consolidate writing skills across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 write instructions on how to make popcorn, whilst at the same time they incorporate their very well taught phonic skills into the spelling of unfamiliar words. Pupils in Year 1 clap the numbers of syllables in words, as an aid to reading and spelling. Because handwriting skills are taught very carefully and systematically from the time they enter school, pupils produce lovely neat work, and by Year 2, are using a joined, legible style. Pupils in Year 1 use carefully sequenced sentences in their retelling of the story of Noah's ark, then produce extensive lists of things Mrs. Noah might take with her. In enriching their writing pupils in Year 2 incorporate phrases such as 'curvy roofs' and 'touches of red' in their descriptions of a Lowry painting. Because the teacher made learning fun, pupils very rapidly understood the rules for adding 'ing' to verbs, and consolidated learning by adding these to their poetry. Poetry is further developed in Years 3 and 4. In one good lesson, pupils identified verbs, adverbs and adjectives then found ways of enriching their poetry by changing these for more colourful vocabulary. Very occasionally, however, less able pupils lost the structure of the poem by turning it into prose. Nevertheless the teacher made very effective use of pupils' good examples to further develop their knowledge of poetic style. By the end of Year 4 pupils produce lively, thoughtful work. Writing by famous writers and authors, such as Charles Dickens, are regularly included in the curriculum. Spelling is of a very high standard, and pupils are using more complex and grammatical sentences to express their ideas. For example, pupils wrote at length in the present tense, and used short, dramatic sentences to capture the feelings of fear and anticipation of the Roman soldiers prior to a battle. The marking of pupils' work is not as strong as other aspects of the teaching of writing. It is not always consistent, although some very good examples were seen.
68. The excellent relationships mean pupils nearly always try to do their best because they know their efforts will be greatly valued. They are confident pupils, who are eager to participate, and because there are frequent opportunities to work collaboratively, share ideas and listen carefully to each other's contributions. Teachers have very high expectations of behaviour, so pupils solve any issues such as differences of opinion amicably and fairly. This was evident during a group poetry reading session when an over dominant member of the group quickly learned the importance of listening and acting upon others' opinions as well as her own. Because teachers plan tasks that capture the pupils' interest, they remain focused for considerable lengths of time, lapses only occurring on the very rare occasions when the teacher's enthusiasm flags. The contribution that the subject makes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Pupils often reflect on their work and usually work out how they can improve. Management of pupils is excellent and all are treated with courtesy and respect.
69. The quality of teaching is never less than good and is very good overall. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teachers use a common format for planning lessons and work very closely to ensure that all pupils have access to a rich and varied curriculum, suited to their individual needs. Although all pupils make very good progress because teachers know them very well indeed, teachers are not always sufficiently vigilant in including information about pupils with special educational needs, or the more able, in planning. The very high level of challenge and the choice of activities found in most lessons are deliberately aimed at

involving both boys and girls. One of the many strengths of the school is the excellent use of time, resources and staff in lessons. The school identifies pupils with special educational needs from the time they enter school, and very careful programmes are then put into place to support them. As a result these pupils learn very quickly, and often catch up with their peers. Support staff are extremely competent and their efforts, and those of parent and governor helpers, are highly valued, and all make a significant contribution whether they are working in or out of the classroom. The curriculum is further enriched through visiting theatre companies and puppeteers. Teachers show that they place very high value on pupils' work by the careful way in which it is displayed. This also greatly enhances the learning environment.

70. Teachers make very good use of opportunities to extend and enhance literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum; writing tasks in subjects such as history and geography, for example, have been modified to stimulate enthusiasm for writing. Work is carefully levelled against National Curriculum attainment targets, although this could be further improved by breaking this down into even smaller steps within each level. The very good practice of comparing work with that from a similar school in the area further consolidates teachers' judgements. Very good use is made of the school's own tests to target pupils who need extra support. Individual targets are set for improvement for all pupils, though these are not always revisited regularly enough. Subject leadership is very good – the school is always looking to improve in this subject. The headteacher and governors have monitored teaching and learning in lessons. Analysis of both school and national test results identified the need to extend the quality and range of boys' reading material, and action was taken.

MATHEMATICS

71. Standards in mathematics are well above average in Year 2. This judgement matches the 2001 National Curriculum results, which have been consistently high or very high for the last four years. The current Year 2 pupils were a little above average when they entered the school. Their achievement since then has been very good; all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are particularly gifted academically or who have a special talent for the subject have made very good progress. The key reason for this is the high quality teaching they receive.
72. The governing body has agreed that since mathematics results are consistently high the teachers need not follow the exact plan of the National Numeracy Strategy. In practice, however, there is little deviation from it. Lessons throughout the school start with an oral and mental activity and develop through whole class teaching to work in groups. The oral and mental activity was exceptionally good in both the Year R and 1 lesson seen and that for Year 1 and 2 pupils. In the former, a Year R pupil wrote a hidden number on the board. The others asked quite sophisticated questions, with many Year 1 recognising that having established that a number was odd, there was no point in asking 'is it between 11 and 13?' In the Year 1 and 2 lesson the pupils had a square of numbers from 1 to 100. They had to follow instructions, first from the teacher then from other pupils, with their finger: 'start on 55, add 5, take 1' ... etc. The teacher included everyone. At one stage, for example, she was very aware that a pupil with special educational needs had done particularly well to follow the trail correctly. She briefly intervened with the pupil giving directions to the others to say: 'Can I just ask X where he is?' When the pupil (X) answered correctly the other pupils broke into spontaneous applause. The teacher also challenged the highest attainers, taking the grid away from them and asking them to follow the trail mentally. Excellent teaching was the norm throughout this lesson, and the pupils responded with exemplary attitudes. They bubbled with enthusiasm for over one hour. The analysis of pupils' work showed that well targeted individual work is a frequent experience for the pupils. The teachers' knowledge of individual needs combined with very strong mathematical understanding are key factors in the gains in understanding the pupils make. Their learning is very good in Years 1 and 2.
73. The teaching is planned and introduced by the teachers but the support staff also make a significant contribution, fully involved and showing a good level of expertise. In a Year R and 1 session a support staff member showed a good understanding of how pupils learn when a lower

attaining pupil could not fully grasp how many animals there would be if he had two pairs. She took him back to the idea of gloves and shoes and he made immediate progress.

74. By Year 2 all pupils are able to give reasons for answers, for example that a multiple of two ends in an even number. About half can organise their work themselves and try different approaches to solve problems in a reflective way. These higher attainers calculate fluently with good recall of simple times tables. The pupils also deal confidently with shape and space, recognising right angles and names of shapes. In mathematics as a whole, the year group are at least reaching the level that would be expected for their age, with about half working at a level expected of a nine year old. This is why standards are judged to be well above average.
75. The current Year 4 pupils entered Year 3 with standards well above average. They maintain the momentum and when they leave the school standards are still well above average for their age. The lower attainers continue to gain ground – they achieve well in Years 3 and 4 because of the individual help they receive and because the work they are given is challenging. It is also reinforced in a variety of curriculum subjects. By the time they leave they can describe the methods they are using to solve problems such as the allocation of large numbers of bags of crisps among different numbers of children. The significant number of higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress through Years 3 and 4, and achieve satisfactorily rather than well. They make good progress in the work they do on handling data, showing, for example, a good understanding of the one in six chance of throwing a die to get a specific number. They also make good progress in the way they use and apply mathematics because the teachers prompt and challenge them well with questions about ‘why?’ and ‘how?’. They are very receptive and interested in investigating. Their progress in understanding shape and space is satisfactory but they are not making enough progress in their arithmetic. Though they remain better at calculation than a typical pupil their age, they could be at a much higher standard. They are not sufficiently fluent with their times tables, for example. One reason for this is that the oral and mental sessions in the lessons are sometimes too easy for them. Also, teachers do not always plan the rest of the lesson’s work to be at high enough levels. The teaching is satisfactory overall and the learning mostly satisfactory because the teachers are skilful questioners, but their lack of specialist understanding does not enable the pitch of the work to be fine tuned enough. They assess whether pupils can do the work they are set, and compensate well where they cannot, but they are overall not setting challenging enough content for this group. The gifted and talented mathematicians in the class are often getting too much right.
76. The lack of progress is only for one group and in one part of mathematics. The result is not that they go backwards but that they mark time. However, in the context of the much high quality work the school demonstrates it should be put right. The school has already identified a concern about the group’s progress, indicating before the inspection that it should be looked at. Much improvement has already been made to mathematics in the school, with standards now well above average compared to above average at the last inspection. Mathematics is used well in other curriculum subjects: turns and degrees in information and communication technology, nets of cuboids (shapes to fold up) in a packaging exercise in design and technology, measurement of height in science and counting of jumps to 100 in physical education, for example. New technology is also used to support mathematical learning – graphs drawn with the aid of computers, for instance. All of these are effective ways of reinforcing and raising achievement, and the improvement shows sound management. However, there is mathematical expertise in the school that is not being used sufficiently well to support and monitor staff in Years 3 and 4.

SCIENCE

77. Standards in science show a very significant improvement since the last inspection when they were average. The teacher assessments for Year 2 in 2001 showed standards to be very high, and although standards of the current Year 2, a different cohort, are a little lower they are still high in relation to those found nationally. The change is not significant given the low numbers in the school. Achievement is very good in Years 1 and 2. The good progress continues in Years 3 and 4 where achievement is good. Standards are very high by the time the pupils leave the school, primarily because of the high standard of teaching the pupils receive. Standards are equally high

in all areas of science. Pupils have very good knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and physical processes, but are also adept at investigating science. Teachers develop pupils' investigating skills formally through teaching them to analyse and plan, but also informally through the way they involve the pupils in thinking in science lessons.

78. The pupils feel their views are respected and are very willing to suggest and justify their ideas. In Year 2 pupils were classifying electrical machines according to whether they produce heat, light, sound or movement. Many explained very articulately that they would expect an object to be in several groups, justifying their decision with a good knowledge of the machine in action. It is this expression of their own scientific ideas that is so key to the advanced standards of investigation that they are showing. By Year 4 the higher attaining pupils are thinking both creatively and logically. In a discussion about soles of different types of shoes there was lateral thinking 'if the boot was new...'. Combined with scientific knowledge 'surely the weight would make a difference..'. The teacher of the older pupils was adept at encouraging the higher attainers to weave in their scientific knowledge with their ideas for investigations, but was also very careful to bring in the younger lower attaining pupils with amended questions. The pupils' written work shows that all are challenged to use the right scientific vocabulary, such as 'dissolved' in an investigation about powders in water, for example. The lower attainers achieve particularly well in mastering this. The higher attainers are extended through challenging work such as identifying the functions of muscles and bones as well as their positions.
79. The teaching of science is very good overall. A strength in all three classes is the way the teachers use resources to stimulate the pupils' enthusiasm and broaden their understanding. Support staff contribute well to groupwork, asking perceptive questions. Both teachers and support staff show a confidence in their scientific understanding that enables them to pick up the pupils' ideas and build on them. The result is very good learning for both girls and boys – the challenging work develops new knowledge and lively sessions ensure pupils learn at a fast pace. The pupils themselves are also responsible for their own success. They co-operate with each other and want to reflect on what they see. They are constantly searching for answers and explanations. The teachers assess their progress well and support where there is any weakness.
80. The accommodation is well used, with Year 1 and Year 2 taught together by two teachers in the biggest room. Information and communication technology is used appropriately in the subject – for example, a video in Year 1 and 2 and a simulation in Year 3 and 4. However, at the moment the school has no equipment for taking measurements electronically, and this limits the accuracy with which measurements can be made. This is not crucial, but would support even better work.

ART AND DESIGN

81. Standards have improved since the last inspection and are now well above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Achievement is very good. No art and design lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection and no judgements could therefore be made on the quality of teaching in these classes. One lesson with excellent teaching and learning was seen in Years 3 and 4. Analysis of work and teachers' planning, together with discussions with pupils and staff, indicate that all pupils throughout the school acquire new knowledge and understanding very rapidly. This is because teachers are very careful to introduce and consolidate new skills in a systematic manner. The school now follows a nationally recommended scheme of work. This helps the teachers to make sure that pupils acquire art skills in a progressive way and that their experiences of art and design become more challenging as they move through the school. Teachers are now beginning to modify the national scheme appropriately in the light of their own pupils' experience. The school has rightly identified the need to provide more focus on the design element of the subject.
82. Because teachers know the importance of developing close observational skills, these are taught from an early age. As a result pupils produce very detailed work, for example the drawings of soldiers from Anglo Saxon times produced by Year 3 and 4. In further developing these skills, pupils draw pairs of cartoon characters and invite others to 'spot the differences'. Pupils are introduced to a range of different art materials from an early age. For example, pupils look

carefully at the techniques used by famous artists, then use oil pastels and water colours to create their own pictures in the same style. Because pupils are taught to select the size of paintbrush best suited to the task, Year 1 pupils produced careful, finely detailed pictures of hyacinths. Well-developed skills in colour mixing were evident when pupils in Year 2 experimented with shades of green for their 3 dimensional marine pictures. In the excellent lesson seen, pupils in Years 3 and 4 compared winter scenes as depicted by different artists, and expressed preferences for different styles because the teacher asked probing, sensitive questions. The teacher's love of art conveyed itself to the pupils, prompting one pupil to say, 'I hope I can produce work like this when I'm an adult!'

83. Teachers are very skilful at linking art and design to other subjects. This develops a sense of purpose in what pupils do. For example, pupils extend their speaking and listening skills very effectively when they describe the merits of different artists, and art is often incorporated into subjects such as history and religious education. Art and design makes a very significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils discuss the feelings and moods evoked by particular artists, and their appreciation of great works of art is fostered from the start. Pupils often work in small and large groups and share ideas, whilst at the same time they listen attentively to others' points of view. Excellent relationships give the pupils confidence to express ideas and opinions because they know they will be valued. Indeed, in the one lesson seen, pupils were bubbling over in their desire to participate.
84. The subject is well managed by the headteacher who monitors lessons to ensure consistency, although she is aware that the time is right to begin sharing this responsibility with other members of staff. The school makes excellent use of the community and visits to enhance learning. During a residential visit to Kilve, pupils sketched, then painted places of interest. Block printing techniques were successfully developed to represent the textures and patterns seen there. The good range of resources, including the kiln, is extremely well used, and staff and parents further enhance resources by lending some of their own. Information and communication technology is appropriately used – for example in Year 2, to experiment with colour and draw insects.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. The evidence in this subject is based on one Year 1 and 2 lesson and the study of work from pupils in Years 3 and 4. As a result no overall judgement of teaching can be made, and no comment can be made on the use of information and communication technology in the subject. Standards of both Year 2 and Year 4 pupils are above average, which is an improvement from the last inspection when they were judged average. The school has taken appropriate steps to raise pupils' achievement, which is now good for all age groups. Both high and low attainers are making good progress, and in Year 2 it was noticeable that some of the best standards were reached by pupils who were not the highest attainers in other subjects.
86. In the lesson seen for Year 1 and 2 the teaching was good. Resources were particularly well chosen for the lesson so that after a deliberately brief introduction the pupils were enabled to make their own choices of what materials to use. They approached the task of making a model animal that stood up with great concentration. A notable number took great pains to clarify the parameters of the task with the teacher, thereby enabling themselves to learn in a particularly reflective way. Some learnt through trial and error, which is what might be expected. However, others were trying out their plans for animals' legs, for example, much more methodically. By the end of the lesson about four of the animals from the twelve Year 2 pupils were accurately constructed – either with the right proportions or good attention to balance. More noteworthy than these overt standards, though, was the pupils' enthusiasm and ingenuity. There was a wide variety of different solutions and methods on display by the end of the lesson – unusual in pupils this age and showing the very good learning that had taken place.
87. The pupils in Year 2 were not as good at evaluating their work as they were at creating the models. However, evaluation is much better developed over the next two years. A typical pupil in Year 3, for example, wrote 'I like it because...' as the final part of a project last February. By Year

4 several are writing about the main problems they encountered and how they were overcome. The teacher's focus on this as an area for development has been particularly effective. The Year 4 products are much more refined than those of Year 2 and they are better at applying their scientific knowledge to the task in hand. Some very effective working torches and flashlights have recently been designed, for example. Their books also show that they have recently studied flapjacks and their packaging, and sandwiches, as well as the creation of the torches and a more aesthetic project, making photo frames. The programme of work is well constructed to ensure a variety of experience.

GEOGRAPHY

88. No geography lessons were seen during the inspection, so no judgement can be made on the quality of teaching. Nevertheless, analysis of pupils' work, together with discussions with staff and pupils, indicate that standards are above average and quality of learning is good. All pupils achieve well. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection. The school follows a nationally recommended scheme of work, which is gradually being adapted to meet the school's needs. Although teachers share plans and meet regularly to ensure that pupils have equal access and opportunity, they are not yet involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms other than their own. The subject is carefully linked to other areas of the curriculum, such as history, literacy and numeracy. This enables the school to make the best use of the time available.
89. Mapping skills are taught in careful sequence. The pupils in Year 1 and 2 make a plan of their classroom and draw simple maps to show the route that the animals might take to Noah's Ark. Photographs of rivers, hills and woods are used very effectively to draw pupils' attention to the things they might pass on the way. They then position these on their maps. This is further developed when pupils compare the features of an Indian village with those of their own. They follow the adventures of a pretend bear, and make passports and identify the countries visited. Their social conscience is aroused when they investigate ways of making their local area safer. Pupils' knowledge of directions is supported by the work with a 'roamer' that they do in Years 1 and 2 in information and communication technology. Here they must programme a moving toy to trace exactly the path they have in mind, turning left or right the correct amount. By the end of Year 4 pupils are employing their well developed skills in orienteering and compass work to follow a route around the village, and use correct symbols to identify places on a map. Because geography is carefully linked to history, pupils study the effects of invaders on their own country, whilst at the same time they identify place names by using grid references; this also enhances mathematical skills. Pupils use Ordnance Survey maps as a means of familiarising themselves with the local area.
90. The curriculum provides a good range of rich, meaningful experiences and teachers modify their planning in the light of experience. Excellent use is made of the community, including visits to places of interest. The excellent quality of relationships that exist throughout the school contributes significantly to the pupils' good rate of learning because they know their efforts will be valued. By saving pieces of children's work from the time they enter school, teachers are able to track progress as the pupils move from class to class. Teachers comment on how well pupils are doing at the end of units of work. The workload is high and thought needs to be given to ways by which assessment procedures might be made more manageable.

HISTORY

91. The school has maintained the above average standards identified at the time of the last inspection. There was not enough evidence during the inspection to make an overall judgement on history teaching, but the history element of a Years 1 and 2 combined science and history lesson was well taught. One excellent lesson was seen in Years 3 and 4, with outstanding teaching and learning. This represents a big improvement since the last inspection. Pupils acquire new knowledge and skills rapidly and all achieve well. As in geography, the school has adopted a nationally recommended scheme of work, which teachers are now modifying. They plan and review work together, but are not yet involved in monitoring teaching and learning in lessons. The excellent quality of relationships means that teachers know pupils well. This contributes significantly to the good progress made.

92. In developing their understanding of time lines, pupils in Years 1 and 2 sequence events in their own lives. They create new time lines by placing objects from the past in order. They learn about people in history such as Florence Nightingale and Graham Alexander Bell, and they know that the great fire of London started in Pudding Lane. In developing their sense of citizenship, pupils buy poppies on Remembrance Day. By the time they leave, Year 4 pupils have a clear understanding of the effects of invaders, such as the Romans and Anglo Saxons, on place names, and compare their lifestyles with those of the present day. In the one excellent lesson seen in the Year 3/4 class, the teacher pretended to be a Martian with no knowledge of our history, in order to test what pupils could remember about Romans and Anglo Saxon invasions. Because learning was exciting, pupils were eager to impart their very secure knowledge. Every opportunity is taken to reinforce the teaching of literacy skills. As a result, excellent questioning and explanation enabled pupils to use well-developed research skills to locate pertinent information about Viking invasions, using a range of sources, including the Internet.
93. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is considerably enhanced through history. They write in the present tense when exploring the fear and anticipation of Roman soldiers prior to a battle. They empathise with the people who lost their land and possessions because of invasions, and write poetry to enrich their knowledge of history. In developing their understanding of the difficulties faced by great inventors from the past, they study the life of famous people such as Louis Braille. The pupils' enthusiasm for history is evident when they talk about a visit to a recently discovered Roman mosaic. Resources are adequate and very well used and are often supplemented by contributions from people within the community.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

94. The breadth of information and communication technology being taught was identified as a weakness in the last inspection. Standards were average in what was taught but the full curriculum was not being covered. Following the school's action plan, the required curriculum is now fully covered and standards seen on the inspection were well above average both for Year 2 and Year 4. Almost all pupils are reaching expected levels and a majority are above what is expected. This judgement on standards was made through observation of a Year 1 and 2 lesson, a study of pupils' work and the observation of individual Year 3 and 4 pupils working on computers. Curriculum planning shows that all areas of the required programme are covered. There is an appropriate balance between the teaching of information and communication technology skills such as the programming of a 'roamer' described below, and the application of those skills such as the use of information and communication technology to enhance learning in other subjects. Both boys and girls are making very good progress in Years 1 and 2, and they make good progress in Years 3 and 4.
95. The school has worked hard over a period of time to raise achievement and this is now very good in Years 1 to 2, and good in Years 3 and 4. Teachers have greatly extended their own expertise through use of the New Opportunities Fund for training. The teaching seen during the inspection was very good and pupils responded with enthusiasm. Many Year 2 pupils successfully wrote an 8-line program to direct a 'roamer' to move around the outline of a rectangle. This sort of work is what would be expected of a typical pupil two years older. What made the lesson a success was the way the teacher fired the pupils' imaginations. They were gripped by the idea from the first moment the teacher introduced a game of giving a cat instructions to find a mouse, using pupils as cat and mouse. They transferred the idea of giving instructions to the mechanical toy with no difficulty at all. The teacher skilfully revised the nature of a square and rectangle and a right-angled turn, and pupils of all levels of attainment were equipped to give the programming a try. They worked together with considerable maturity to achieve their aim, learning very well. A study of pupils work showed that the Year 2 pupils are also able to use a computer for word processing, some with different fonts. They can draw charts and can also produce pictures, filling in blocks of colour.
96. By Year 4 the pupils are very confident with keyboard and mouse. They are able to combine text, tables and diagrams, and can choose fonts, font size and layouts with their audience in mind. A good example of this is the work that goes into their newspaper, 'The Shepton Times'. The quality of much of the work is again what might be expected of pupils two years older. The pupils are

able to discuss how information and communication technology is used and reflect on how it simplifies tasks. Two Year 3 pupils demonstrated how a bar chart could be quickly drawn by the computer when data is entered, for example. Two Year 4 pupils demonstrated how a simulation enabled them to change variables and predict what would happen rather than carrying out a test practically. There was a clear progression between the skills of Year 3 and those of Year 4 in that the Year 3 pupils were not yet at the stage of experimentation to see which graph would look best, whereas the Year 4 confidently explored their options. Pupils in both Year 3 and Year 4 can use email, and both age groups were able to explain some advantages of using information and communication technology.

97. Resources were enhanced at the time of the inspection by the use of laptops jointly owned by other local first schools. This enabled the whole Year 3 and 4 class to use computers in religious education, for example, when they designed a poster aimed at encouraging people to come to Christianity. The school is actively considering whether to use some of the money it has to carry forward to enhance provision further. The purchase of laptops would enable use of computers by more pupils more often, whilst the purchase of equipment for sensing data would enhance both information and communication technology and science. It could also enhance mathematics in terms of use of mathematics to look for patterns in science. At the moment the Year 4 pupils reach level 4 of the National Curriculum, the level expected of 11 year olds, in much of their information and communication technology work. This use of sensors is the only part of the level 4 standard they cannot demonstrate.

MUSIC

98. Teaching and learning in music have improved since the last inspection and are now good. Standards have also improved. They are above average in both Year 2 and Year 4 and pupils of all standards achieve well. The school makes good use of specialist teaching from outside agencies. This has improved teachers' skills in music and has given them the confidence to teach it. A significant number of pupils attend extra curricular lessons for recorder, brass, woodwind and strings, and they have ample opportunity to further exhibit their skills in assemblies and concerts. These pupils reach standards considerably in excess of what would be expected for their age. There is often a joyful feel to music making. All pupils participate in singing both in lessons and assemblies and, from an early age, pupils sing tunefully and enthusiastically, often enriching their performance by facial expression and mime, because teachers are good role models.
99. In the one excellent lesson seen in the mixed reception and Year 1 class, pupils were bubbling with enthusiasm to participate because the teacher made learning highly enjoyable. Very effective links were made with literacy when pupils were asked to clap the syllables in their name. Careful questioning by the teacher enabled them to recognise similar patterns when comparing the clapping of their name with others'. Because the teacher used questions very effectively to test what pupils had learnt from previous lessons, pupils used symbols to modify their singing and clapping and included soft, loud and silence in their interpretations of familiar songs. The teacher cleverly transferred this knowledge to the playing of an African drum, and was careful to demonstrate the correct techniques.
100. Words specific to the subject are carefully introduced and reinforced, so pupils in Year 3 and 4 understand terms such as 'tempo' and 'dynamics' and know how to apply these to their performance. Following careful introduction and explanation by the teacher, pupils in Years 3 and 4 worked in pairs to use tuned percussion and voices to compose a musical pattern to accompany words from a poem. Although pupils' achievements were celebrated at the end of the lesson, there was insufficient time to develop this further. The teacher intervened well to enable pupils of all abilities to have equal access, although a little more thought needs to be given to enable pupils to investigate ways of recording their sequences. Because the teacher had prepared the lesson well, pupils soon settled quickly in the classroom session, although a minority was less well focused during the group work. In linking music with other subjects across the curriculum, pupils make their own musical instruments in design and technology, then play them to others, and they learn songs specific to their topic work, such as that on animals. The many pupils attending extra curricular lessons have a secure knowledge of how to read musical notation. However, this is not always reinforced in class lessons.

101. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils often listen to the music of great composers such as Saint Saens, and empathise with the feelings and moods of music. During a dance lesson, pupils in Year 1 used graceful movements in their interpretations of swans, and good opportunities are given for pupils to appreciate the music of visiting performers. They share ideas and take turns fairly, and listen to others' points of view with interest. Music from other cultures, such as that from India, is used well, and resources include a good range of multi cultural instruments. In learning to contribute to the excellent quality of relationships within the community, pupils to sing and play for the elderly. Pupils' sheer enjoyment of singing was clearly demonstrated when a Year 1 pupil sang all the words of 'All things bright and beautiful' very sweetly during a reading activity.
102. Teachers work closely together to ensure that all pupils have equal access and opportunity. Pupils take part the Somerset Music Extravaganza and have good opportunities to participate in music within the community, such as bell ringing, and brass and woodwind ensembles. The value that the school places on staff from both in and out of school is very high, and contributes significantly to the good progress that pupils make.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

103. Lessons in games and dance were observed during the inspection. Standards in these areas are above average, both for Year 2 and Year 4. Many of the pupils in Year 2, for example, can make useful comparisons of their own and others' performances, learning from others. Their throwing and catching skills are well developed. Pupils in Year 4 can control a ball with a hockey stick reversing the stick to pull it back. They understand the need for a warm up and the effect it has on their bodies. Although no other aspects of physical education were taught during the inspection, the teachers do keep good records of how well the pupils have performed in their physical education and these indicate that above average standards are reached generally in the subject. Achievement is satisfactory through Years 3 and 4 and good in Years 1 and 2, for pupils of all levels of attainment.
104. The teaching of physical education is good, and on occasions very good. In a very good lesson for Years 1 and 2 about throwing and catching the ball, the teacher harnessed the pupils' enthusiasm, constantly challenging them to succeed at different tasks. Learning was rapid with the teacher ensuring a good balance of physical activity and reflection on technique. Years 3 and 4 are also enthusiastic about the subject, but in the lesson seen they lost concentration too often despite a well structured range of activities planned by the teacher. This was partially because the playground that has to be used has limitations – the slope acts against control of the ball for example. The lack of concentration limited their improvement, and meant that they were not always applying their skills with enough accuracy. In general, however, pupils' learning is good in the subject.
105. The school's planning shows that all areas of physical education are to be covered during the year. The residential trip to Kilve for Years 3 and 4 provides a good opportunity to undertake some activities not frequently provided for this age group. Both boys and girls also receive some visiting specialist coaching in sports such as hockey and football, and play matches. Swimming is required for pupils at some time in Years 3 to 6, and is not provided by the middle school that most attend. This was a point made during the last inspection, and the school has been trying to find a way to provide it to Years 3 and 4. The search has been effective and it is now programmed for the summer term, after which it is due to be reviewed. The staff are determined to overcome the restraints of the school's accommodation and succeed in giving their pupils a valuable experience of the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

106. Standards in religious education have improved since the last inspection and are now above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils achieve well in Years 1 to 4. Teaching has improved and is now good for pupils in Years 3 and 4; no lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2

therefore no judgements could be made on the quality of teaching in those classes. However, from analysis of work, discussions with staff and pupils and from the one good lesson seen, all pupils make good gains in learning. Good teaching, together with excellent quality of relationships means that pupils try hard because they want to do well. The careful linking of the subject to events within pupils' experiences, as well as to other areas of the curriculum, are other contributory factors. Activities are more stimulating and pupils have access to a wider range of resources, some of which are shared with other schools.

107. The pupils are given good opportunities to compare their own and other religions with events in their everyday lives, so that by the time they leave the school they are beginning to explore the deeper meanings behind Bible stories. After listening to the story of Noah's Ark, pupils in Year 1 wrote lists of items Mrs. Noah might need to take with her; this also enhanced literacy skills. Year 2 pupils demonstrated their understanding of the story of Jesus and the Storm by sequencing the events in picture form. They then wrote appropriate captions to accompany them. In developing their understanding of the significance of journeys in different religions, pupils in Years 3 and 4 track the sequence of events following the Israelites' departure from Egypt, and compare these with a journey they have made. In the one good lesson seen, Years 3 and 4 pupils decided that parents had the greatest influence on their behaviour. As one pupil remarked, ' I wish people had told me some things I didn't know!' Because the teacher used very sensitive questions, pupils linked this learning to the qualities of being a Christian. They then used laptops to design posters on the same theme.
108. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through their studies of other religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism, pupils know the importance of showing respect and tolerance for others beliefs and customs. They explore the significance of The Noble Eightfold Path to a Buddhist, in learning to overcome suffering. In capturing the moods of excitement and anxiety of Mary and Joseph on the birth of Jesus, pupils empathise with their feelings and emotions when writing accounts in the present tense. Time is given for reflection in lessons and assemblies. Following the story of the parable of The Lost Coin, pupils reflected on how they would feel if they lost something special. Music and well-chosen hymns often set the scene for worship.
109. In the good lesson seen, the teacher was well prepared and demonstrated a good knowledge of how pupils learn. The pupils were continuously challenged to think for themselves, and good questions resulted in pupils offering considered opinions on what it means to be a Christian. Planning of lessons is satisfactory, and teachers share planning to ensure that pupils continue to learn new skills progressively. Although the headteacher monitors lessons, this has yet to be extended to other members of staff. Examples of work are kept, and teachers use questionnaires effectively after each unit of work; these gives a good indication of what pupils have learned and what they need to do next. Visits from members of the local clergy greatly enhance pupils' learning and visits to the local church provide further good opportunities.