

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **DUNSTER FIRST SCHOOL**

Minehead

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123643

Headteacher: Mr P Hoyland

Reporting inspector: Mr C Parker  
11897

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> - 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2002

Inspection number: 195765

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	13 St Georges Street Dunster Minehead
Postcode:	TA24 6RX
Telephone number:	01643 821254
Fax number:	01643 821243
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Butterworth
Date of previous inspection:	16 <sup>th</sup> June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
C Parker	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Physical education Art and design Special educational needs	The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
W Twiss	Lay inspector		The pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
M Powell	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English History Geography Music Religious education.	
P Askew	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>24</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Dunster is a First School for children aged 4 to 9 years. The 156 pupils on roll are taught in six classes by seven full time teachers and one part time teacher. The teachers and the pupils are supported by nine teaching assistants. Almost all of the pupils are of white UK heritage, but three come from other ethnic groups. All of the children speak English as their first language. Eleven have identified special educational needs, two of whom have statements. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average. The pupils come from diverse social and economic backgrounds and twenty-eight have free school meals, which is broadly average. Their attainment on entry fluctuates from year to year, but is above average overall. The school is very popular and nearly half of the pupils come from outside the catchment area.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a highly effective school. The teaching is very good, and the pupils are achieving well and attaining high standards. The school is very well managed and the headteacher and his deputy work together to provide excellent leadership. They are very well supported by the teachers, governors and parents. The school monitors and evaluates its own performance thoroughly and, as a result, is very well placed to continue to move forward. The school provides very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The teaching is very good. Consequently, the present pupils are achieving well and attaining high standards. In English and mathematics standards are well above average.
- The pupils behave very well, concentrate on their work and contribute fully to lessons.
- The school's caring ethos provides a very positive environment in which the pupils' personal development is fostered very effectively.
- The teaching assistants make a major contribution to the learning of all pupils', including those with special educational needs.
- The curriculum is well planned and interesting; it is considerably enhanced by the very good range of trips, visits and extra curricular activities.
- Partnerships with parents are very strong and contribute significantly to the effectiveness of the school.
- The leadership of the headteacher and his deputy is excellent. The self-evaluation procedures and school improvement planning are very strong.
- The governors' supportive and challenging approach helps to ensure that the school improves.

#### **What could be improved**

- There are no major areas of weakness. A small number of minor improvements that the school should consider are identified in the report.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made very good progress since it was last inspected in June 1997. The teaching has improved and is now very good. In mathematics, there is no longer underachievement because pupils

of all abilities are fully challenged and standards are high. The design and technology curriculum is now comprehensive and effectively taught. The assessment of the children in the foundation stage has improved and is now entirely satisfactory. The role of the curriculum co-ordinators has developed considerably and they now play a very positive part in the management of the school. The monitoring and self-evaluation procedures are very strong features of the school's work, consequently it continues to move forward in a consistent manner.

## 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	B	B	C	B
writing	A	B	C	B
mathematics	C	D	D	C

**Key**

well above average    A  
 above average        B  
 average                C  
 below average        D  
 well below average   E

At the end of the foundation stage most of the pupils are reaching the early learning goals and a good proportion is exceeding them. Taken overall, the pupils are well prepared to begin Year 1. The inspection found that standards are higher, than when the school was last inspected, in almost all subjects except information technology where standards remain broadly average. In Year 2 there has been a marked improvement in standards this year. Standards are now above average in all other subjects except in English, mathematics, history, geography and physical education where they are now well above average.

The national test results dipped at the end of Year 2 in 2001 because the proportion of pupils with special educational needs was higher than in the previous years. Nevertheless, the school is getting very good results in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. The results over recent years show it has been less successful in mathematics at the end of Year 2, but that standards have been much higher by the end of Year 4. When compared to similar schools the results of national tests in 2001 were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The results in recent years compare very favourably with the national trend in reading and writing, but run below the national trend in mathematics. This year's provisional results at the end of Year 2 show considerable improvement, particularly in mathematics where all of the pupils have attained the expected level and well over a third have reached the higher level. In science, the results of the teacher assessments in 2001 were broadly in line with the national average. The standards this year are above average at the end of both Year 2 and 4. The pupils with special educational needs and those with the potential for higher attainment are well supported by their teachers and the teaching assistants. As a result, pupils of all abilities are making very good progress and achieving well.

The school sets comprehensive and challenging targets and the provisional results at the end of Year 2 indicate that these targets have been exceeded this year.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils' attitudes to their work are very good. They take pride in all that they do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils behave very well. There are consistently high standards of conduct throughout the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships in the school are very positive. The pupils are courteous and polite. They relate well to each other, their teachers and other adults.
Attendance	Overall, levels of attendance are similar to those seen nationally. Unauthorised absence is negligible. The pupils arrive on time and their lessons start promptly.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	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 teaching is very good overall. All of the lessons seen were at least satisfactory. Four out of ten lessons were good; a similar proportion was very good and one in ten was excellent. In the foundation stage, the teaching is generally good. In Key Stages 1 and 2, there is a high level of consistency in the quality of the teaching, which has many very strong features. The teachers have very secure subject knowledge which they use to very good effect to plan interesting and motivating tasks. Their knowledge of the national numeracy and literacy strategies ensures that the teaching of the basic skills of English and mathematics is very effective. The tasks set by the teachers are carefully modified to challenge different ability groups. The more able pupils are stretched in their learning and those pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by the teachers; consequently the pupils' learning is progressing at a very good rate. The well trained and efficient teaching assistants provide the teachers and the pupils, of all abilities, with very valuable help and guidance.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is very well planned and meets the statutory requirements of the national curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage pupils has been satisfactorily implemented.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for the pupils' personal development. The provision for their moral and social development is very strong, and their cultural development is good overall.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The pupils feel valued and know that their school is a safe and happy place.

The parents hold the school in high regard. The relationships between the school and the home are excellent. The school provides a comprehensive range of information for the parents. It is of a high standard and is effective in letting the parents know about their children's progress and other important events in the life of the school.

Overall the curriculum is broad, interesting and well organised, but some aspects of the science curriculum are not covered frequently enough. Similarly, in information and communication technology, the pupils do not have frequent opportunities to work at higher levels because access to equipment is difficult in some classrooms.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher successfully generates a high level of enthusiasm and commitment amongst all those connected with the school. He and his deputy work together very effectively and provide excellent leadership.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are effective in shaping its direction. They fully meet their responsibilities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school comprehensively monitors and evaluates its own performance. All of the available data relating to both national and internal annual tests is used very effectively.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of its available resources. All priorities within the school development plan are allocated appropriate funds; the success of each activity is frequently monitored and the value for

	money evaluated.
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The role of the subject co-ordinators has developed considerably. They now play a very full part in managing the curriculum and school improvement.

The school has a sufficient number of teachers, and their expertise and experience are very well matched to the requirements of the curriculum. The well-trained teaching assistants are exceptionally well deployed and very effective. The accommodation is put to full use, but has some significant shortcomings. For example, some classrooms are very cramped, there is no central library or computer facility and an ageing temporary classroom lacks toilet facilities.

The governors have fully adopted the principles of best value. They compare the school's overall performance with other schools locally and nationally, consult widely on many issues, ensure they make acquisitions through competition and consistently challenge the school to make sure it is working effectively.

**PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The good progress made by the pupils.</li> <li>• The very good teaching and the commitment of the teachers.</li> <li>• The good information provided by the school</li> <li>• The very good relationships between parents and teachers.</li> <li>• The strong leadership of the headteacher</li> </ul>	

The inspection team agrees with the many positive points raised by the parents. The pre-inspection meeting with parents, the questionnaire responses and letters to the registered inspector overwhelmingly supported the work of the school. Many parents made specific reference to the commitment and skill of the teachers and particularly the headteacher. There were very few concerns expressed by parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. The pupils are achieving well and attaining high standards by the end of Years 2 and 4. The pupils' attainment on entry varies from year to year, but taken overall is above average. At the end of the foundation stage, most of the pupils are reaching the early learning goals and a good proportion is exceeding them, particularly, in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical development. The pupils are generally well prepared to begin year 1.
2. Since the school was last inspected, standards have risen in almost all subjects except information technology where standards remain broadly average. This is largely as a result of the pupils not having sufficiently frequent opportunities to work at higher levels because access to equipment is difficult in some classrooms. The present standards are at least above average in all other subjects except in English, mathematics, history, geography and physical education where they are well above average.
3. The school undertakes very comprehensive analysis of both the national and optional test results. After allowing for the higher incidence of special needs pupils in 2001, this analysis creates a picture of a school that is getting very good results in reading and writing both at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. The results over recent years show it has been less successful in mathematics in Year 2, but there have been significant improvements by Year 4 so that standards have been well above average by the time the pupils leave the school. The results dipped in 2001 because there was a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than in the previous year. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels was above average in reading, average in writing and just below average in mathematics.
4. When compared to similar schools, the results in 2001 were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The results in recent years compare very favourably with the national trend in reading and writing, but run below the national trend in mathematics. This year's provisional results at the end of Year 2 show considerable improvement, particularly in mathematics where all of the pupils have attained the expected level and well over a third have reached the higher level. The underachievement in mathematics identified at the last inspection has now been eradicated. These results concur with the inspection findings that standards are now well above average at the end of Year 2 in English and mathematics. The improvements are the result of changes in the deployment of the teachers, the thorough monitoring of standards, professional development and very good teaching.
5. Analysis of the available Year 3 and 4 optional test results suggests that the pupils are achieving well in Key Stage 2. By the end of Year 4, almost all of them are attaining the expected level and a high proportion is working at higher levels in both English and mathematics. Here again, the results confirm the inspection judgments that standards are high.
6. In science, the results of the teacher assessments in 2001 were broadly in line with the national average, although there was considerable variation between the areas of scientific study. The standards this year are above average at the end of both Years 2 and 4, but the arrangement of the science curriculum prevents the pupils from attaining very high standards because some areas are not taught to some year groups.

7. The pupils with special educational needs and those with the potential for higher attainment are well supported by their teachers and the teaching assistants. The teachers modify the tasks they set so that there is an appropriate degree of challenge for the groups within each class. As a result, pupils of all abilities are making very good progress and achieving well.
8. The school sets comprehensive and challenging targets and the provisional results at the end of Year 2 indicate that these targets have been exceeded.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

9. The pupils' attitudes to their work, their behaviour, their relationships and personal development are all very good. The parents are very happy with these facets of the school's work. The high expectations of acceptable standards of behaviour ensure that the parents and pupils alike are well aware of the school's rules.
10. The pupils' attitudes to their work are very good and they take pride in all that they do. Displays and the high standard of presentation of work in their books reflect the pupils' consistent desire to do their best. The teachers and the teaching assistants provide stimulating and interesting lessons that frequently excite the pupils and generate a passion for learning. Consequently, the pupils are confident and enthusiastic; they settle quickly into their lessons and sustain concentration on their tasks. Most of them are good listeners and are not afraid of asking questions. They respond well to their teachers and are often willing to volunteer their own thoughts and ideas. In a Year 2 history lesson, for instance, the pupils were keen to describe what it must have felt like to have been the first person to land on the moon. The pupils enjoy their lessons and are often straining to do more. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, one of the pupils wanted "to do a hundred pages of maths in one go!" Many of the pupils regularly attend the interesting range of clubs that the school offers.
11. Overall, the pupils' behaviour is very good. Responsibility and maturity are the watchwords that underpin the standards of behaviour seen throughout the school. The pupils come to their lessons on time and their movement around the school is safe and orderly. Their conduct in the classroom is consistently very good and there is no significant disruption to lessons. The same positive picture of behaviour was seen before and after school and during break and lunch times. There are no obvious signs of either bullying or the isolation of individual children. Support for the few pupils who need extra help with their behaviour is effective in making sure that they are fully involved in lessons and the wider school community. There have been no exclusions in the past three years.
12. Relationships in the school are very good. The pupils are courteous and polite and they welcome visitors. They relate well to each other, their teachers and other adults. In lessons, they collaborate well and often discuss their ideas with each other. They take turns when using resources such as the computers. They respect their surroundings and there is no deliberate damage to school property. The pupils also show appropriate respect for occasions such as assemblies and visits to the local church.
13. The pupils' personal development is good. They understand their responsibilities to society and they learn a good range of social skills. Consequently, the school helps them to develop into well-rounded citizens. Pupils of all ages willingly undertake responsibility for the jobs given to them by their teachers. Even the youngest children are keen to help; for instance, the children in the reception class gave out and collected musical instruments. The headteacher and staff consult with the pupils, who recently put forward their views on ways of improving the school's

playground. The pupils approach their responsibilities to the wider community in a sensible and mature manner. They support local and national charities and make visits to the community. They appreciate that there are others who are less fortunate than themselves. The school reinforces this ethic, for example, by introducing the pupils to sign language.

14. Overall, the rate of attendance is similar to that seen nationally, and unauthorised absence is negligible. The pupils arrive on time and their lessons start promptly.
15. Very good attitudes and standards of behaviour make positive contributions to the pupils' achievements. The previous inspection report identified these aspects as being particularly strong and this remains the case.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

16. The teaching is very good overall. Four out of every ten lessons were good, a similar proportion was very good and one in ten was excellent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching.
17. In the foundation stage, the teaching is generally good. The teacher provides the children with a range of well-prepared activities, which are well supported by the teaching assistants in a caring environment where relationships are secure. As a result, the teacher enables the pupils to learn effectively and prepares them well to begin Key Stage 1.
18. In Key Stages 1 and 2, there is a high level of consistency in the quality of the teaching, which has many very strong features. The teachers have very secure subject knowledge that they use to very good effect to plan interesting and motivating tasks. Their knowledge of the national numeracy and literacy strategies ensures that the teaching of basic skills of English and mathematics is very effective. The direct teaching of, for example, mathematics helps the pupils to gain a secure understanding of key processes. Similarly, very good teaching of reading and writing results in many pupils expressing themselves with confidence, clarity and imagination.
19. At the start of lessons, the teachers make it clear what they expect the children to learn. The expectations are high and the teachers set challenging tasks in interesting contexts. For example, in a Year 4 English lesson, the pupils were learning to use clauses to construct an argument. This task was based on the different views of people about a proposed by-pass. The pupils responded very positively to the challenge and made very good progress as a result. The teachers use a good range of effective teaching methods, their classrooms are well organised and the pupils very well managed. In a few lessons, all of these factors combine with considerable pace and energy to produce excellent teaching and learning. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson when the pupils' were learning how to give change, the teacher's skill, drive and infectious enthusiasm resulted in an excellent lesson where the pupils' learning rattled along. The whole-class session was also a very strong feature at the end of this lesson. The teacher used the time to assess the extent of the pupils' learning and to outline what they would learn next. This is a strong element of many lessons because the school has consciously developed the teachers' skills in this important area.
20. In many lessons, the tasks set by the teacher are carefully modified to challenge different ability groups. The more able pupils are stretched in their learning and those pupils with special educational needs are very well supported by both the teachers and their assistants. The well-trained and efficient teaching assistants provide the teachers and the pupils, of all abilities, with very valuable help and guidance.

21. The teaching of other subjects, for example, history, information technology and physical education is also very good. The teachers use the time and the available learning resources very productively. In an excellent physical education lesson in Year 2, the teacher very effectively motivated the pupils to compose and perform a dance sequence inspired by music and poetry. In history, geography and religious education the teachers provide the pupils with interesting learning resources and make excellent use of the locality to bring their learning to life.
22. The pupils' work is very thoroughly marked and assessed. Most of the teachers make very full comments to help their pupils to improve and also set clear targets for them. Homework is used very effectively to extend the pupils' learning, and many of the tasks are directly linked to the work done in lessons. The pupils respond well to these homework tasks. There is much evidence that they are well supported at home and that their parents and carers are given frequent feedback so that they know how well their children are doing.
23. Taken overall the teaching is very good; the teaching assistants are very effective and consequently the pupils' learning is progressing at a very good rate.

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

24. The curriculum that the school provides for the pupils for five to nine-years-olds is very broad. It is very well planned and meets the statutory requirements of the national curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage pupils has been satisfactorily implemented. The provision for pupils who have special educational needs is very good. They are presented with appropriately planned activities that match their individual targets and receive very good support.
25. At the time of the last inspection, it was reported that certain aspects of some subjects were not being taught. For instance, design and technology was identified as a key area for improvement. Since then, comprehensive schemes of work based on national guidance for all subjects have been introduced and have helped to raise standards. However, although standards are above average in science some aspects of the science curriculum are still not covered frequently enough.
26. Overall, the curriculum is well constructed to ensure good coverage and an appropriate allocation of time. The planning for most subjects is now very good. There are schemes of work for all subjects drawing upon national guidance. The schools' clear policy for monitoring the curriculum, introduced since the last inspection, has been effective in improving both the planning and the assessment procedures. The school has implemented the national literacy and numeracy strategies successfully, and the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are well developed in other areas of the curriculum. The planning includes the use of information technology to extend and enhance the children's learning across the curriculum, but infrequent access to resources results in this having limited effect.
27. All pupils have equal access to the subjects of national curriculum and the very good range of extra curricular activities. Their individual targets are also made known to their parents. In lessons, it was evident that pupils were keen to achieve the set targets and that the teachers' planning addressed their individual needs.
28. The provision of extra curricular activities is very good. A weekly programme includes in turn gymnastics, tennis, football, catchball, skipping, signing and during the summer, swimming. There

are also music clubs for guitar, and recorder, and an environmental club, called 'The badger club', which helps to maintain the school's very good environmental area. The schools' sporting teams regularly participate and achieve well in regional events. The music groups perform regularly in assemblies, locally in Dunster and in the Somerset area music events.

29. The school has good relationships with other schools. There is a pre-school on site with which the school has good links. The school has also made very good links with the local middle school, to which most of the pupils proceed. The school arranges visits to prepare them for the transfer, and the subject co-ordinators liaise with the school to ensure curriculum continuity. The school has also forged good links with West Somerset community college and is involved with its recent Technology College bid, which will enhance the schools provision for technology and provide increased opportunities for more able pupils. It also has good links with the local community and plays a very active part within the West Somerset Initiative.
30. The provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. There is a comprehensive health education and drugs policy, and the school has achieved an award from Somerset health authority as a 'health promoting school'. Throughout the school there is evidence of the pupils' work on healthy eating and 'safe sun' used as display to inform others. The pupils in Year 4 have a three-day residential trip for which they plan the menus and take part in a range of outdoor activities. The governors have decided not to provide sex education, but review this decision annually.
31. The school makes good provision for personal development. There has been an improvement in the provision for the pupils' spiritual development since the last inspection and their moral and social development is very strong. The pupils are given a clear moral code in 'The Golden Rules,' which are on display throughout school and included within the behaviour policy. Opportunities for spiritual development have increased through well-planned assemblies, which include appropriate themes and time for reflection. In addition the pupils' spiritual development is fostered through the curriculum. For example, in a Year 1 religious education lesson that included a visit to the church opposite, the pupils were sensitive to the atmosphere and sat in silence imagining what the church would have been like when first built. The provision for their cultural development is also good. One teacher has spent time teaching in Ghana and uses this experience to inform the pupils about life there, and the Year 3 pupils have e-mail pals in a school in Australia. However, there is scope for improvement particularly in developing the pupils' awareness of non-western cultures, for example, through art and music activities.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

32. The guidance given to the pupils is very good; it is a strong feature of the school's work that is greatly appreciated by the parents. The pupils feel valued and know that their school is a safe and happy place.
33. All members of the teaching and non-teaching staff take the pupils' welfare and safety seriously. A well-established policy for child protection is understood by all of the staff. Consequently, they are well aware of the procedures that must be followed if any concerns emerge. A similarly robust health and safety policy ensures that regular risk assessments take place, shortcomings are reported and timely action is taken to rectify them. The school gives considerable attention to health care and the school is recognised as a health promoting school. Routine screening for important health matters like eyesight and dental care is commonplace. The teachers and the teaching assistants take extra care to ensure that the pupils work safely. For instance, a useful display of photographs illustrates to the pupils how to use equipment in

their physical education lessons safely. The lunchtime supervision is also of a high standard and ensures that the pupils are safe and that the lunch breaks run smoothly.

34. The school's very good procedures for promoting high standards of behaviour amongst all of its pupils are described fully in the sections above. There are equally strong procedures for minimising unauthorised absence and in maintaining overall levels of attendance equal to those seen nationally. The shortcomings in recording attendance that were identified in the previous inspection have now been rectified.
35. The school has very good working relationships with the specialist support services. The teachers know that they can call upon these professionals. This helps them to assess the individual needs of the pupils when it is considered that extra help might be required.
36. The school puts much time and effort into assessing and recording the progress made by each pupil. It regularly assembles a comprehensive and up to date range of data that is effective in giving the teachers a clear picture of exactly what the pupils can do. The school is, for example, developing a common approach to record keeping with its pre-school group. As a result, the teachers are gaining knowledge of important matters such as the children's personal and social development and their linguistic and mathematical achievements. As the pupils move through the school, these assessments are used to determine the support needed by individual pupils, and to identify common needs throughout the school. For example, the school's recent analysis of the assessment data has resulted in more attention being given to handwriting and spelling. Consequently, standards have risen and the high quality of the pupils' presentation of work is apparent.
37. The monitoring of personal development is largely informal, but nevertheless is effective because of the teacher's knowledge of and dedication to their pupils. They work hard to develop a sense of worth and positive self-esteem amongst the pupils. They are alert to opportunities for giving positive and encouraging feedback to the pupils. For instance, the marking of the pupils' work provides helpful comments that enable them to take pride in their individual efforts. Their personal needs are also well met. In a Year 2 history lesson, for instance, the teacher took care to arrange the seating so that the pupils were not affected by strong sunlight.
38. A significant strength of the school's work lies in its efforts to include all pupils in the community. The headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants work effectively to support the pupils who need extra help with their learning. Consequently, the guidance for all pupils is very good and exclusions are extremely rare.
39. The children's induction to the reception class is well planned. A programme of visits to the school and to the pre-school helps the parents and staff to get to know one another. As the children take their first steps into formal education, they see familiar faces and surroundings. This helps them to settle quickly and happily into school.
40. There are good arrangements when the pupils transfer to their next schools. A programme of visits and exchange of information assists in making the transition as smooth as possible.
41. The previous inspection concluded that the support offered to the pupils was effective. This aspect of the school's work remains very strong.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

42. The relationships between the school and the parents are excellent. The parents who attended the meeting with members of the inspection team and those seen during the inspection expressed overwhelming support for all that the school does. A large number of parents responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and in doing they highlighted many strengths of the school.
43. The school provides a comprehensive range of information for the parents. It is of a high standard and is effective in letting the parents know about their children's progress and other important events in the life of the school. Starting in reception, new parents are welcomed into the school and are given detailed information on what to expect as their children start their formal education. The teachers hold regular consultation meetings with the parents as their children progress through the school. The written annual reports indicate to the parents exactly what their children have achieved and give guidance on how they can develop and achieve even more. A valuable home/school reading diary encourages the parents to make comments on how they feel about their children's progress with their reading. The school has a culture of giving the parents information on their children's achievements with their homework. The teachers give clear information to the parents on what is taught each term. They are responsive and willingly meet the parents before and after school to discuss any concerns. A measure of the school's success in this regard is that all parents have readily signed the home/school agreement.
44. All members of the teaching and non-teaching staff work hard to encourage the parents to play a full part in the life of the school. They actively seek the help of parents and other volunteers in the classrooms. In this way, they have assembled a loyal band of helpers who make a useful contribution to the pupils' work in mathematics and English. The helpers are well prepared for their roles in school and they receive training to make sure that their work is effective. From time to time, the school invites people with specialist knowledge to come in and talk to the pupils about topics such as World War II and the evacuation.
45. A thriving parent-teacher association organises fund raising and social events that provide funds for the purchase of additional resources and facilities in the school. The association has, for example, contributed towards the provision and upkeep of the school's swimming pool.
46. Overall, the parents make a valuable contribution to the pupils' learning. They provide that "little extra", in school and at home, that has a positive impact especially on the standards achieved in mathematics and English. The previous inspection in 1997 recorded good relationships with the parents. This strength has been built upon and relationships are now excellent. The inspection team found ample evidence to support the parents' very positive views of the school.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

47. The headteacher and his deputy work together very effectively and provide excellent leadership. They articulate a clear vision for the school that is strongly supported by the Governing Body and fully implemented by the teachers and the teaching assistants. The headteacher successfully generates a high level of enthusiasm and commitment amongst all those connected with the school.
48. The school's aims, which were formulated at an open meeting for the whole community, are clearly stated and evident within the school. They underpin the school's work and result in the pupils and the adults in the school feeling valued. The headteacher has created a climate for learning where the pupils are cared for and are able to achieve very well. This happens because

there is a shared commitment to purposeful learning and high standards of achievement amongst the teaching and non-teaching staff.

49. Through very thorough and carefully conceived management policies, the headteacher and his deputy have brought about significant improvements since the last inspection. This can be clearly seen in the way that they have carried out comprehensive and effective monitoring of the quality of the teaching, particularly in English and mathematics. For example, the action points resulting from the deputy headteacher's observations of mathematics have been fully embraced by the teachers and are now key features of their very good and sometimes excellent lessons.
50. The role of the subject co-ordinators has also developed considerably. They now play a very full part in managing the curriculum and school improvement. The policy statements for each subject are clear and helpful. They guide the work of the teachers and set out precisely the role the co-ordinator will play in managing and monitoring developments. The schemes of work and comprehensive plans are kept under constant review to ensure that the pupils are receiving their full entitlement. In all subjects they carry out their responsibilities effectively and efficiently and are always on the lookout for ways to bring about further improvements.
51. The school comprehensively monitors and evaluates its own performance. All of the available performance data relating to both national and internal annual tests is used very effectively. For example, the average results in mathematics in recent years led to changes in the deployment of the teachers, comprehensive training and regular observation of teaching. This has made a significant difference and results have risen considerably this year. All of the information relating to the analysis of performance data and the monitoring of teaching is presented to the Governing Body for scrutiny, as part of the headteacher's thorough and comprehensive termly reports. As a result of these reports and their wide-ranging involvement with the school the governors have a very clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are now effective in shaping the direction of the school through, for example, the focus and priorities of the school development plan and by setting clear performance targets for the headteacher.
52. The school works hard to support all of the staff in its drive for consistently high standards of teaching. It has achieved the national "Investor in People" award for the quality and effectiveness of its staff development work. All members of staff are aware of their roles and responsibilities and have targets for improvement. The use of performance management within the school is very effective. Training and support are used to foster improvements, and the effectiveness of training courses is evaluated not only in terms of their impact on provision for the pupils, but also in terms of value for money. New teachers are very well supported and quickly absorb the ethos and purposeful atmosphere of the school. The school's newly qualified teacher receives plentiful support from the deputy headteacher and other colleagues. A suitably planned programme is based on needs and priorities, and consequently she is enjoying her new job and is teaching very effectively.
53. The school has a sufficient number of teachers whose expertise and experience are very well matched to the requirements of the curriculum. The headteacher recognises the importance of having an effective and committed team. The well-trained teaching assistants are exceptionally well deployed throughout the school and provide the pupils and the teachers with excellent help and support. The teachers work in very close harmony with them. The school's secretary provides a smooth and efficient administration service. The teachers regularly give up their time to provide an interesting range of clubs for the pupils. Consequently, children of all talents and abilities receive the extra support that contributes towards the high standards achieved.

54. The accommodation is well maintained and kept very clean by the caretaker. It is put to full use, but has some significant shortcomings. The multi-purpose hall is valued by the school, but provides barely adequate space for physical education lessons involving the large number of pupils in the Year 4 class. Otherwise, it is used very effectively for teaching, assemblies and after school clubs. Some classrooms are very cramped and restrict, for example, the use of information and communication technology and opportunities for pupils to work on larger pieces of three-dimensional art. There is no central library and no computer facility. Moreover, an ageing temporary classroom lacks the necessary toilet facilities. This can lead to disruptions to learning as the pupils have to make journeys into the main building. Generally, the school has good learning resources, but has fewer computers than is desirable and no facilities for whole class work in information and communication technology. The teachers use the resources well. In mathematics lessons, for example, the use of real and simulated coins inspires the pupils when learning about money. The school makes good use of external resources; for instance, several pupils said that they enjoyed visits to the mobile library.
55. The school makes very good use of its available resources. This is clearly illustrated in the exemplary management of provision for pupils with special educational needs, the careful deployment of the support assistants and the judicious involvement of external agencies. As a result of an evaluation of their own performance, the governors have recently undertaken further training in the analysis of financial information. All priorities within the school development are allocated appropriate funds and the success of each activity is frequently monitored and its cost effectiveness evaluated. The balance carried forward within the budget is to be partly used to improve the playground area. The governors have fully adopted the principles of best value. They compare the school's overall performance with other schools locally and nationally, consult widely on many issues, ensure they make acquisitions through competition and consistently challenge the school to make sure it is working effectively.
56. Taken overall, the leadership and management of the school are excellent.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

57. There are no key issues for improvements, but the governors, headteacher and teachers should continue to implement the very effective school improvement plan and should consider the following points:
- (1) Revision of the science curriculum to ensure that all attainment targets form part of the pupils' learning in each year
  - (2) Improvement of the facilities for the whole-class teaching of information and communication technology
  - (3) Extension of the range of opportunities for the pupils to learn about non-western cultures through, for example, music and art.

Paragraphs 87, 94, 113

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	23

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	18	16	4	0	0	0
Percentage	8	43	39	10	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. should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

### 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)	156
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	11

#### English as an additional language

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

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

**Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	19	12	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	15	15
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	25	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (94)	87 (94)	87 (91)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	13	15
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	27	25	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (91)	81 (85)	87 (91)
	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	153
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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)	7.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.3
Average class size	26

**Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	201

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

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

**Financial information**

Financial year	2000/1
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	£
Total income	376 236
Total expenditure	349 570
Expenditure per pupil	2 242
Balance brought forward from previous year	21 791
Balance carried forward to next year	48 457

## *Results of the survey of parents and carers*

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	156
Number of questionnaires returned	74

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	22	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	76	24	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	80	19	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	54	34	9	1	1
The teaching is good.	86	14	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	78	19	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	89	9	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	84	16	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	77	20	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	93	7	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	81	15	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	30	9	0	8



## **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**

58. At present, there are thirty children in the Foundation Stage. The provision for these children is generally good, especially in the areas of literacy and numeracy. The pre-school links, especially with parents, are strong. Many children begin the Foundation Stage with well-developed skills in literacy and numeracy and in some important aspects of their social development. A high level of care in the reception class ensures that the children are very settled and secure. This is the case also for the children with special educational needs whose needs are carefully assessed and monitored. Very good provision is made for them by all the adults who work in the reception area.
59. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is given a high priority. This enables the children to move to more extended and more formal activities at a comparatively early stage. The basic skills of handwriting are also well taught from this early stage. The children learn to sit and listen for quite extended periods. They work well both as a class and when receiving individual help, for example, with their reading. The teacher has high expectations of what the children should be able to do by the time they join Year 1.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

60. The children make good progress because the expectations of the adults are clear and routines are well established. After play, for example, the children return to the carpeted area quickly and then go sensibly and safely to their allotted chairs. They co-operate well when they are organised in small groups for tabletop activities and most listen patiently to the teacher and to each other. At times, a few forget the stricture against calling out either because they are bubbling over with the need to make some observation or they have arrived very quickly at the answer to a question. They are now well able to attend to matters of hygiene and can usually dress and undress independently for physical education. The usual courtesies are expected. Adults remind the children to say “please” and “thank you” when receiving refreshments or equipment. They are vigilant because they want to ensure that the children are safe in the somewhat cramped accommodation. The activities are tightly organised and children know what is expected. However, there is now a growing recognition that many of the children are ready to exercise greater independence, for example, in their choice of activity and in the selection of resources.
61. The children make good progress in developing a range of social skills that result in their being able to work co-operatively with others and sustain an activity. The vast majority achieve the targets set for them by the time they join Year 1.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

62. Many of the children come to school with a well-developed vocabulary and clear diction. However, a few need additional help to develop appropriate speaking skills to enable them to participate fully in the more formal aspects of class work. The children have many opportunities to talk, for example, about the books they share as a class or when visitors come to school to make special presentations. When a gecko was brought into the classroom during a topic on pets, the children were able to relate their own need for warmth, food and drink to those of the animal. The development of reading and writing is strong as the children regularly identify

letters, and in some cases whole words, in the shared books. A significant minority of the children can read whole sentences. They practise writing key letters to achieve a good shape and most write their own name legibly. Some children are able to use a picture dictionary to spell words they need to write. Others are at the stage where they overwrite what the adults write for them.

63. A few children still need very regular opportunities for talk, for example, through role play and other creative activities where adult intervention would provide the stimulus that might lead to a writing activity.
64. Overall, many children exceed the early learning goals for literacy and begin Year 1 with a secure range of reading and writing skills.

### **Mathematical development**

65. The children develop effective numeracy skills at an early stage. This is because they regularly recite a wide range of number rhymes and take part in various number activities. Their numeracy skills are also developed by other everyday tasks, such as counting children present and absent or counting equipment in and out of containers.
66. Many children are counting beyond ten and beginning to recognise the concept of “take away”. When the Unifix cubes were brought out for counting activities, some children spontaneously began to create repeating patterns with them while they awaited instructions. The children also enjoy and are very alert during regular short, sharp bursts of mental mathematics.
67. The teaching of numeracy is very sound, and most pupils confidently acquire basic number concepts. However, a few do not have sufficient opportunities to engage regularly in a range of purposeful and practical activities to develop their numeracy concepts securely enough. Most children are well on course to achieve the goals identified for the end of the Foundation Stage.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

68. Overall, the children are making satisfactory progress in this area. However, in areas traditionally regarded as geography and history, many make good progress because the planning of work links well to that undertaken in Year 1. The children are developing effective observation skills to learn about the world immediately about them. They can talk about where they live and how they come to school. They know that some local buildings are much older than others and that time has elapsed since older members of their families attended the very same local school. They benefit from the teacher’s good knowledge of the local area and are encouraged to identify its features.
69. The children have some opportunities to use various materials, but the provision of a wider range of activities would allow them to explore sand, water, paint, paper, wood, play dough and fabrics much more extensively and purposefully. However, a well-planned unit of work on the care of pets has stimulated the children’s interest and enabled them to recognise the basic survival needs of water, food and warmth. The children enjoy opportunities to use materials. In one literacy lesson, the interest level was high as children were encouraged to construct a rail road with accompanying buildings after reading a book about a train ride. Appropriate provision is made to foster aspects of religious education so that the children acquire some sense of self-esteem and where they stand in relation to others. Overall, the children are on course to achieve the early learning goals, but the potential is there for many to exceed them.

## **Physical development**

70. The children use pencils, brushes and other mark-making equipment confidently and competently. This is because the teacher sets a high priority on their being able to write at the earliest possible stage. They handle puzzles quite deftly and are quick at spotting the pieces that need to be adjacent to each other. They have been taught how to handle scissors carefully and to use spatulas for imprinting marks on play dough or plasticine. One group of girls very carefully rolled pieces of play dough to copy the shapes of numerals 1 – 5. All the children receive good support to develop fine manipulative skills.
71. During physical education lessons in the hall, the teaching ensures the safety of the children. They can move at different speeds, changing direction, stopping and starting without bumping into each other. Some of the activities, such as balancing a sponge ball on a small racquet, are very challenging and ultimately unsuccessful, but because the relationships are good the children persevere and make an effort. There is little opportunity for using wheeled vehicles, climbing, or using outdoor balancing and tunnelling equipment. This somewhat restricts the provision for some aspects of physical development.

## **Creative development**

72. The children enjoy using paint, felt pens and other colouring equipment. They can successfully colour within an outline and select paint colours for aesthetic effect. They have occasional opportunities to engage in role-play activities, for example in the current "Pet Shop". However, the role-play areas could be developed much further to provide a very rich stimulus for language, social and creative development.
73. The children have regular opportunities to sing and to play musical instruments. The songs and rhymes often link activities, and the children participate with interest and a high level of enjoyment.
74. The provision for the children's creative development is satisfactory overall and good where musical activities are concerned, but it could be further enhanced. At present, the narrow range of creative activities limits the use of resources and restricts the children's choices. Given greater scope, many of the children could exceed the early learning goals in this part of the curriculum.

## **ENGLISH**

75. The well-above average standards attained by the pupils at the end of Years 2 and 4 are a direct result of the consistently high quality of the teaching, some of which is excellent. The teaching ensures that the pupils' skills in reading and writing are most effectively developed. The small number pupils who join the school with somewhat below average literacy skills make very good progress. The support for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they are fully included in all aspects of the work and it enables them to develop skills that they can apply across a range of other subjects.
76. Standards are continuing to rise because the school carefully monitors the pupils' work, assesses where the weaknesses lie and takes appropriate action. For example, the school is currently seeking to improve the standards in spelling through the additional phonic awareness training for some pupils. The early literacy support also boosts the skills of the younger pupils as they

encounter the need to improve their reading and writing skills to meet the growing demands of the curriculum. Through good leadership and teamwork, the school has established a very appropriate literacy strategy and effectively planned its implementation. This is a key factor in the consistency of the provision.

77. The pupils speak very fluently because they begin school with a well-developed vocabulary that is systematically extended through the many opportunities for talk. During a history lesson on space travel in Year 2, for example, the pupils posed a range of interesting questions to which there were extended responses from other members of the class. Other children were able to talk imaginatively about what it must have felt like to be the first man on the moon. The pupils in Year 3 demonstrated the fun of spoken language as they practised reciting tongue twisters aloud. The children listen very carefully during class discussions and do not hesitate to interject comments at appropriate points. Again, during discussion about the preparations for a space journey one child corrected a point made by another, stating firmly “No, first they check their equipment, put on their special space suits and THEN they get on board the rocket!” The adults do not shy away from regularly using technical words, for instance, to describe aspects of work in science or natural geographical features. This enriches the pupils’ everyday vocabulary.
78. Attainment in reading is well above average as a result of numerous, effective approaches. The pupils’ attitudes to reading are very positive. They revel in opportunities to be heard reading, and their reading diaries provide evidence of the frequency with which they read at home. This has a powerful effect on raising their attainment. Each child has at least a weekly opportunity to read individually to an adult. The shared and guided reading that takes place as a regular part of the literacy provision encourages the less confident readers to become more accurate and fluent. By the end of Year 2, the pupils’ reading comprehension skills are very advanced. This is why they confidently and competently use CD Rom resources as well as books to search for information. The pupils in Year 4 are expressive readers and they confidently undertake to read quite challenging text. The adults provide good role models as they regularly read aloud to the children excerpts from novels, poems and extracts of factual information. The narrative skills of the teachers who lead assemblies are very well developed and influence the way the pupils aspire to read. The school has a good range of reading material, but is never complacent in its efforts to improve the stock and to match all levels and tastes. A Book Fair and book character days further encourage the pupils to regard reading as an enjoyable activity.
79. The pupils are eager and capable writers because the teachers present them with exciting topics and develop their skills so that they can undertake a good range of writing. A key factor in the success of the school’s writing programme is the coherent and consistent way in which writing is developed in many curriculum areas. Displays of work around the school are enhanced by well-written accounts of projects undertaken in design and technology, lively posters advertising sun protection, stories based on the writing of Allan Ahlberg and science diagrams that are meticulously labelled. By the time they reach the end of Year 4, the higher attaining pupils in particular write at length. They can structure quite lengthy arguments, for example, in favouring of one location over another, in discussing the pros and cons of school uniform and when writing narrative. A good proportion of the pupils in Year 2 can vary their sentences to create dramatic effects, such as “Once, he had a match against a boxer. But that’s another story!” They also know how to construct effective openings to create the mood of a story and their basic punctuation and paragraphing skills are developing very well. This is evident, for instance, in the work of the more confident writers in Year 2. Very good support is given to the pupils who struggle to punctuate their work accurately, to write capital letters in appropriate places and to ensure that the key words identified for pupils up to the age of seven are spelt correctly. They, therefore, experience success as writers and many write at considerable length by the time they

reach the end of Year 4. The pupils' handwriting and general presentation are also of a high standard because they were identified as areas for improvement and have received close attention. The good support given to the pupils enable them to form letters well and regular practice sessions have been very successful in raising standards. As a result, many of the pupils develop neat, uniform, joined handwriting by the time they leave the school.

80. The teaching of all aspects of literacy is very successful. In the best lessons, the planning for the literacy hour and the subsequent activities is meticulous. For instance, the learning objectives for developing vocabulary or sentence structure are precise and clearly reflected in the activities selected to meet the targets set for each pupil. The pupils benefit considerably from the fact that the teachers not only provide good examples of writing, but also help them to plan and review what they have written. The comments addressed to pupils as they work, and in the teachers' marking, raise the pupils' awareness of the quality of their writing and help them to edit their own work effectively. The every-day communication between the adults and the pupils reflects a consciousness of the quality of spoken English.
81. The resources for teaching and learning are very good. Within the limitations of the present computer provision, information technology is well used for reading and writing purposes. The work of the classroom assistants is having a powerful effect on raising standards among the pupils who need more individual support. They also play a very valuable part in the assessment of the pupils' work. Regular homework in reading and spelling further raises the pupils' attainment.

## **MATHEMATICS**

82. Standards in mathematics have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now well above average. Analysis of national tests results at the end of Year 2 shows that results have been average or below until this year when the proportion of pupils working at higher levels has increased markedly. This is a direct result of very good teaching, comprehensive monitoring, good professional development and changes in staff deployment. Currently, the classes in Year 2 are small and this has also contributed considerably to the improvements. The results at the end of Year 2 are now consistent with the standards that have been attained in optional tests at the end of Year 4 over the last few years.
83. The teaching of mathematics is generally very good and on occasions excellent. In many mathematics lessons, the teaching assistants work very effectively with small groups of children to extend their learning. The teachers plan the lessons extremely thoroughly in line with the national numeracy strategy. In all lessons, the teachers are very clear about what they want the pupils to learn; they write the objective for the lesson on the board to ensure that the pupils know what is expected of them. The mental starter sessions are well used to practice counting and the recall of number facts. These activities are all conducted briskly and in some lessons, for example in Year 1, the pace is very rapid indeed and accelerates the pupils' learning. In all classes, this good pace is maintained throughout the lesson. In Year 2, for example, the pupils were set clear time targets within which to complete quite challenging mathematical investigations into patterns and relationships in numbers. The teacher's questioning of the pupils to encourage them to use different strategies and explain their answers was a particularly strong feature of this lesson. In Year 3, the lessons are very well structured and the activities are carefully modified to provide the right amount of challenge for the different ability groups within the class. In one lesson, the teaching assistants gave very skilful assistance to pupils on the special educational needs register and as a result they made particularly good progress. In Year 4, the teacher introduced the pupils to the use of a protractor to draw angles. The high

expectations which pervade the school were very evident in this lesson which had a strong emphasis on accuracy.

84. The mathematics co-ordinator has focussed her efforts on improving the effectiveness of the whole-class sessions at the end of lessons. This has clearly been effective because they are generally used to good effect to assess the extent of the pupils learning and prepare them for the next stage. This was excellently illustrated in Year 1 when the teacher assessed the extent of the pupils' progress in working out the change required in shopping transactions. She then explained very clearly the next stage of the process.
85. The pupils are keen to learn, respond well in lessons and generally enjoy mathematics. They are achieving very well because of the very good teaching. By the end of Years 2 and 4, a very high proportion of pupils is attaining the level expected for their age and a good proportion is working at higher levels. Scrutiny of the pupils' work shows they do a lot of work in all areas of the mathematics curriculum, have good all round knowledge and are developing a good range of skills.
86. The management of mathematics is exemplary. It is highly organised and benefits considerably from the monitoring undertaken by the deputy headteacher. These activities are clearly focussed and result in points for action, which the teachers willingly accept and build into their practice. These developments are then checked to see if they result in the expected improvements. Often they do and, as a consequence, standards rise.

## SCIENCE

87. Standards in science are above average and the pupils are making good progress. However, the current science curriculum is very thoroughly documented and carefully organised, but it does not promote the continuity of learning that is needed for the pupils to attain very high standards. For example, in Key Stage 1 the learning is focussed on life processes and living things in Year 1 and materials and their properties, and physical processes in Year 2 but they do have a good range of opportunities to carry out scientific investigations in all years. A re-allocation of the themes covered in each year is needed. **This is an area the governors should consider for further development.**
88. Although there is scope for further improvement standards have risen since the last inspection when they were in line with the national average. The pupils in Year 1 can identify and group those foods that are good for them and those that are not. They can also state the similarities and differences in minibeasts and record their observations when growing seeds. By the end of Year 2, the pupils use appropriate vocabulary in their descriptions of what they see and record in writing. In their work on materials, for example, they can classify them as either opaque or transparent. In Year 3, the pupils make good progress in lessons because the teaching is very good. In one lesson, for instance, the teacher very skilfully organised and managed an investigation so that the pupils initially worked in a structured way, but then continued independently to discover for themselves the effects of adding batteries to a simple circuit. In Year 4, the pupils are currently learning about the interrelationships of food chains and webs.
89. The teaching in the lessons seen was very effective because the teachers used their good subject knowledge to motivate and interest the pupils. The lessons were well planned with a wide range of accessible and appropriate resources. The teachers questioned the pupils throughout the lessons to ensure their understanding was developing as they completed the tasks that had been set for them. The pupils responded well to the challenge and showed a keen

interest and enthusiasm that enhanced their learning. The teachers modify the level of demand for different groups of pupils and the teaching assistants play an important role in helping and guiding the pupils in their learning.

90. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator has carried out a monitoring exercise to ensure that all aspects of the national curriculum for science are covered. The school is about to embark on a review of the curriculum, which should improve the continuity of learning by ensuring that all aspects of science are regularly included in the teachers planning.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

91. No art lessons were taught during the period of the inspection. Nevertheless, it is possible to conclude from the pupils' work in their sketchbooks, folders and on display within the classrooms that the above-average standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained.
92. In Year 1, the pupils are developing their skills, such as the use of colour, well. They have made effective use of the Internet to find out about environmental sculpture and created their own collages related to the environment. A very positive development is that the pupils are beginning to evaluate elements of their work. In Year 2, the pupils have made clay tiles from detailed sketches. They make good use of sketchbooks for detailed drawings, for example of the local church, which show a growing awareness of line and tone.
93. In Year 3, the pupils have made interesting wire sculptures following a visit to look at metal sculptures in Minehead. In Year 4, the skills that have been developed in the previous years are evident in their carefully composed watercolour paintings and their detailed drawings of chairs that illustrate their good use of tone and texture.
94. Overall the pupils use a good range of media and engage in a range of interesting activities' but they do not have sufficient opportunity to learn about art from non-western cultures. **The school should consider developing this aspect of art further.**

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

95. At the time of the last inspection, standards in design and technology were below national expectations at both Year 2 and Year 4. The need to raise standards in design technology was a key issue. The implementation of a comprehensive scheme of work, increased resources and further training for the teachers have improved significantly the standards that the pupils attain and they are now above the national expectations.
96. The pupils in Year 2 showed good standards of design, making and evaluation skills in producing a multi-coloured coat to fit a particular doll or soft toy. They were of a high standard, with a wide range of designs, and fitted the required object. The pupils in Year 4 have made musical instruments, which they played in a concert in assembly at the end of the project. The finished instruments show that the pupils have the necessary skills for cutting and joining a range of materials. In all classes, the pupils use a range of materials and components including food, wood and textiles and electrical components, and effective links are made with other curriculum areas. For example, during the inspection, the pupils in Years 2 and 3 were drawing on work in their present science topics to design moon buggies and torches respectively.
97. The quality of the teaching in the lessons observed was never less than good and was very good on two occasions. The teachers' planning is good and makes use of suitable resources to

support the pupils' learning. For instance, in Year 3 the pupils had a large variety of torches to dismantle which resulted in very good understanding of the mechanisms involved. They worked sensibly in pairs, recording their findings and then reassembling the torches without either breakage or loss of parts. Similarly in Year 2, the pupils used pictures, books and a CD-ROM to find different ways of making axles and wheels. They showed great respect for each other as they discussed in pairs each other's designs and reported back to the group on the various features. This resulted in very good designs for space buggies.

98. Since the last inspection the co-ordinator has developed a whole-school policy for the subject with a scheme of work based on a combination of the nationally recommended guidance, a published scheme and the school's own plans. This has been successful in raising attainment. The system for monitoring the pupils' progress is both good and manageable. The co-ordinator has developed a portfolio and a very good photographic record of the pupils' design and technology work, including both finished projects and work in progress to support them in this task. At the present, however, information technology is not used sufficiently to enhance the pupils' learning in design and technology lessons.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

99. The well-above average standards seen at the last inspection have been maintained. The scheme of work ensures that fieldwork features strongly in the teaching and learning. Where it is not possible to conduct fieldwork, aspects of geography are brought alive through other imaginative teaching approaches. One example is the way the teacher in Year 1 used Barnaby Bear to simulate visits to different parts of the world.
100. By the time they reach the end of Year 4, most pupils are familiar with using a range of maps. These include simple pictorial maps of the Island of Struay, local area route maps that the younger children produce after local visits and world maps from atlases and globes. The pupils acquire a very good geographical vocabulary that they use appropriately to talk about various environments. They are familiar with terms such as settlement and village, and others that describe physical features and services. As they study a range of contrasting locations in this country and elsewhere, the pupils begin to understand what factors influence the development of different places. For instance, through their study of a village in India, the pupils in Year 4 recognise that climate has a powerful effect on the way people produce food. A sense of distance between the United Kingdom and Australia was clearly transmitted as the pupils in Year 1 were told about the number of meal times that would pass before they arrived in Sydney. An email link enables the pupils in Year 3 to exchange written and pictorial information with friends in Australia, and provides considerable enrichment of their geographical knowledge, skills and understanding.
101. The geography curriculum is very well planned and provides a very good basis for the high quality teaching. The topics and the associated activities interest and motivate the pupils. Very good support is provided to ensure that the pupils with special educational needs make good progress, for example, in the use of computers during geography lessons. They are also well supported when they undertake written tasks, for instance when all the pupils in Year 1 sent a post card home while pretending to be in Australia. The pupils' curiosity and their confidence in speaking ensure that they are alert and interested during the good discussion sessions in all the classes. The teachers expect the pupils to present their work well. Therefore, the written work is interesting, neatly laid out and often enhanced by carefully drawn sketches.

102. The teaching and learning in geography reflect the school's aims very closely. The very well constructed programme of work, the interest of the co-ordinator in environmental matters and the purposeful way in which enquiry skills are developed are the key factors in the successful teaching and learning.

## **HISTORY**

103. As the result of a thorough overhaul of the scheme of work, standards in history are well above those usually found at the end of Years 2 and 4. The school has arrived at a very good balance between the topics suggested by national guidance and others that the school has identified in order to provide a curriculum that is unusually broad and balanced. This includes topics relating to local history and others that have a wider, international flavour such as early space travel.
104. The pupils have well above average historical skills because the subject is regularly taught across the three terms of the school year. Historical skills are included in the planning of each term's work and become more sophisticated as the children move up the school. For example, by the end of Year 2, the pupils develop keen observation skills when gathering information about local homes and other domestic buildings in the past. During Year 3, they refine these skills as they study the local castle and focus on the specifically Victorian and Saxon aspects of the village. They also have regular opportunities to learn about famous figures in history, beginning with Florence Nightingale and Guy Fawkes in Year 2. In Year 4, they consult a variety of sources for information about the Tudors and to answer questions such as, "Why did Henry VIII marry six times?" They also apply their skills effectively when comparing the lives of rich and poor people in Tudor times and in their studies of life in ancient Egypt. Records of the pupils' work over time reflect the discussions that underpin the high quality of their writing.
105. The teaching is of high quality. It is based on an exciting scheme of work, a very good variety of well-organised activities and the use of stimulating resources. The visual resources, including those obtained through the use of information and communication technology, are carefully selected and inspire the pupils to exercise their enquiry skills. The use of the Internet, for example, is a strong feature of the work on ancient Egypt and email contacts and local people have provided valuable insights into life during World War II. Through using these different resources, the pupils develop skills in formulating historical questions and evidence gathering that are well above average. The pupils in Year 3, for example, used what they had initially learned about World War II from video, books and other sources to formulate a range of questions to be used when interviewing a local resident.
106. The pupils not only take great pride in writing about history, but also enjoy talking about it. In discussing mainly his reading attitudes, a pupil in Year 4 spontaneously referred to material he had discovered about ancient Egypt and spoke animatedly about what the Egyptians believed about the afterlife. He showed an impressive level of detailed knowledge for a child of eight years old. The subject is very well led by a co-ordinator who has a deep interest in history, coupled with planning skills that ensure a very secure basis from which teachers have been able to design interesting units of work. Displays of work in history enhance the cultural element of the school environment.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

107. Standards in Years 2 and 4 are in line with the national expectations. This was also the judgement made at the last inspection. It is a result of the effective teaching of specific skills, followed by the practice of these skills within lessons and opportunities for the pupils to use information technology across the curriculum. However, this level of attainment is being achieved with a ratio of computers to pupils that is below the national average.

108. In the literacy and numeracy sessions, pairs of pupils rotate in using IT to support the group task. CD-ROMs and the Internet are used for researching topics and in geography the Year 3 pupils are producing a guide to their locality which they are emailing to their e-pals in Australia.
109. The pupils in the reception class can confidently use paint programs and during the inspection were observed using the mouse to create a picture by choosing fairytale figures, which they resized and placed in the picture. In Key Stage 1, there is evidence from completed work and observation that the pupils are developing keyboard skills, can enter simple text, use a paint program to produce designs and effectively search CD-ROMs to find information to support their topic work. Year 1 pupils were observed giving instructions in a correct sequence in preparation for controlling a programmable toy.
110. In Year 3, the pupils use simple data handling packages and interpret their findings. The Year 4 pupils use branching databases for classification and can confidentially use paint programs to produce high quality repeated patterns. During the inspection they were observed successfully using a search engine on the Internet to locate a website and find the predators of slugs.
111. The teaching of information and communication technology skills is good, but the inadequacy in resources limits the effectiveness of these sessions. The pupils have to gather in front of a small screen and it is often very difficult for them to see. Furthermore, they have insufficient access to the computers in order to practice the skills they have been taught. Consequently, they do not reach the higher levels of which they are clearly capable.
112. The leadership of this area of the curriculum is strong. The co-ordinator has supported the teachers in the successful implementation of the national guidance with detailed units of work highlighting required resources and cross-curricular links. Recent monitoring by the co-ordinator has resulted in a more consistent recording of the pupils' achievements. Further work is still required for the assembly of a complete portfolio of the children's work that will support all teachers in their assessment of the pupils' information technology capability.
113. Since the last inspection the school has updated its computers. In so doing, it has provided Internet access in all classrooms and installed appropriate programs to support the development in ICT at all stages. Good training in the use of these new resources has been provided for all members of staff. It has raised their confidence and resulted in good teaching and support for all pupils in the use of information technology. The school also uses the IT facilities of the West Somerset learning bus, which allowed all the Year 2 pupils to work on a history simulation linked to their topic on Guy Fawkes and data handling activities linked to a project on 'Ourselves' in science. However, the provision of better access to resources is the key factor in attaining higher standards. **This is an area the governors should consider for improvement.**

## MUSIC

114. Standards in music are above expectations because the subject is well taught and is a highly valued aspect of the school's broader curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The music co-ordinator is very well supported by a specialist music teacher, a parent who offers string tuition and another teacher who is developing guitar playing. As a result, the pupils are now receiving a rich musical curriculum and good performance opportunities. The success of the music curriculum is due to the very good teamwork amongst the staff, who are ably led and supported by the full time music co-ordinator.

115. The pupils in Key Stage 1 are developing a good ear for the pitch of different sounds. They can reproduce high and low sounds in imitation of their teacher. They understand how to hold a variety of instruments correctly and use them effectively to combine different sounds during a class performance. These skills are developed in Year 2 when the pupils have opportunities to respond to different kinds of music. For instance, one class in Year 2 successfully put together a performance depicting weather sounds. They rehearsed well in pairs and then presented the whole piece to a good standard. The pupils handle instruments correctly and are always desperately eager to use tuned and untuned percussion.
116. From singing nursery rhymes in the reception class, the pupils in Year 1 are now able to pitch their voices well and introduce musical colour into their singing. A class in Year 1 sang tunefully to the teacher's flute accompaniment. The repertoire was well chosen and there was an appropriate, initial 'warm up' of their voices. The older pupils are learning about note values and key signatures and many can tap instruments when reading from standard notation. This is well supported during the guitar and violin lessons where the pupils regularly use the note names and recognise how many beats are required for different notes. They also recognise rests in written notation.
117. The teaching is lively and firmly based on the teachers' good knowledge of how to conduct whole-class music lessons and how to prepare instrumental and singing groups for performance. The pace of the lessons is brisk, and the variety of activities sustains the pupils' interest and involvement. They eagerly take part in concerts within the school and have participated in the West Somerset "Spectacular". Music features regularly in assemblies where the hymn singing has improved by weekly practice. Music is also a strong feature of the Year 4 pupils' leaving service.
118. The resources for music are good and accessible. From its current strong base, the school is continuing to develop its musical provision and has appropriately identified the subject as a forthcoming area of focus on the School Development Plan. The school is alert to the fact that the multicultural aspect of music could be developed further.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

119. The pupils' performance in physical education is well above average because they are very well taught. Moreover, the school uses its good facilities well and extends and enhances the curriculum through many activities outside of lessons. The strong position reported at the last inspection has been maintained.
120. In all of the lessons observed, the teachers expressed themselves very clearly at the start of the lesson so that the pupils knew exactly what was expected of them. They warmed up before all activities and cooled down afterwards. In Year 1, through good coaching and motivation by their teacher, the pupils were able to create interesting sequences of movement across apparatus. The teacher emphasised the importance of a well balanced start and finish to the sequence. The pupils responded very well and most were able to successfully improve their work during the course of the lesson. This was also the case in a dance lesson when Year 2 pupils constructed a sequence of movements inspired by music and poetry that illustrated the contrasting moods of 'calm' and 'storm'. The teacher's active involvement in demonstrating movements and her encouragement to show the power and ferocity of a storm, for instance 'ripping the stone from the cliff', inspired the pupils to fully express themselves. In a well-structured Year 4 lesson, the teacher developed the pupils' ability to jump for distance by producing a sequence of hop, step and jump. In all of the lessons seen, the teachers demonstrated how the pupils were to carry out

activities, and encouraged them to evaluate not only their own work, but also that of other individuals and groups. This feature contributes significantly to the improvement of the pupils' performance during the lessons. In all cases, the lessons seen were drawn from the scheme of work, were prepared thoroughly and ensured that the pupils' learning built on their previous experiences.

121. The subject is very well managed and the resources are good. The school hall is a valuable facility that is adequate in size for the large classes of older pupils and is used to good effect. The swimming pool, which is used every day after school in the second half of the summer term as well as for lessons, adds considerably to the opportunities available to the pupils. In addition, gymnastics, tennis, football, catchball and skipping clubs operate every week. Large numbers of pupils attend these activities and benefit considerably. The school also participates in inter-school and competitive events and is very successful. For example, the school tennis team recently won the area final and will now represent the school in the county competition.
122. Sport and physical education make healthy and exciting contributions to the life of the school.

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

123. The quality of the pupils' work is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, thus maintaining the good picture seen at the last inspection. The planning for teaching and learning closely follows the suggestions of the revised county syllabus and takes very good account of the approach to assessing what the pupils know, understand and can do, in accordance with "Learning from Religion" and "Learning about Religion". These two concepts, identified in the syllabus, provide a strong linking motif through the various units of work.
124. By the end of Year 2, a good volume of recorded work provides strong evidence of the pupils' understanding of festivals and celebrations. They can relate the special celebrations in their own lives to some of the major festivals observed in world religions. They recognise that for Muslims, Ramadan is a highly significant festival and that for Hindus, Diwali has a particular significance. Through hearing stories from the life of Jesus and others from the Old Testament, the pupils in Key Stage 1 understand that the Bible has a special significance for Christians, but that other major world faiths revere their own special books. The local church provides a rich resource for work at different levels in Key Stages 1 and 2. Through a series of visits, the pupils in Year 1 recognise special features of the church such as the font, pulpit and the altar. They have also sat there quietly absorbing the peaceful ambience because the teachers are eager to foster an awareness of the spirituality of places of worship. By the time they leave, the Year 4 the pupils acquire a broader knowledge of Christianity and what it means to be a Christian. They extend their learning as they explore aspects of Judaism and recognise some of the features associated with it. A display of artefacts in Year 4 stimulates the pupils' interest and has provided tangible evidence of the symbolic significance of items such as the tallit and the seder plate.
125. Good teaching ensures that there is an appropriate emphasis on developing respect for the values and beliefs of others. This includes a recognition of the fact that prayer is a common feature of many religions and that different ways of praying have a special significance for different faiths. The teachers have made a good effort to increase their own knowledge and understanding of different religious practices so that special books are handled in a way that respects the practices of believers. The level of interest shown by the pupils is high and their role-play experiences have been well supported by local clergy and are well remembered. As a

result of the teachers' sensitive approaches, topics are discussed and visits to places of worship are made in a very appropriate manner.

126. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and supports her colleagues very well by ensuring that suitable resources are available. The teachers are very alert to the need to continue to provide a range of stimulating activities to support each unit of work.