

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTH NEWTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

North Newton, Bridgwater

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123689

Headteacher: Mr D Gliddon

Reporting inspector: Mr RWG Thelwell
20977

Dates of inspection: 20th – 22nd May 2002

Inspection number: 196132

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Road
North Newton
Bridgwater
Somerset

Postcode: TA7 OBD

Telephone number: 01278 662140

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D Norman

Date of previous inspection: 8th – 10th July 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20977	Mr RWG Thelwell Registered inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage; Equal opportunities; Mathematics; Science; Information and communication technology; Geography; History; Physical education.	The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
13911	Mrs J Gallichan Lay inspector		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?
22058	Mrs C Richardson Team inspector	Special educational needs; English; Art; Design and technology; Music; Religious education.	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

North Newton Primary School is set in the heart of the village of North Newton, four miles south of Bridgwater and draws pupils from a wide socio-economic background. When last inspected in July 1997, there were 61 pupils on roll. At present, 77 attend, including 14 children in reception. There are three classes with an average size of 26. Each class caters for pupils from more than one year group. Nearly all children attend pre-school groups before joining reception at the start of the school year in which they become five. Assessment on entry shows overall attainment to be in line with that expected for this age. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average; no pupils have statements of special educational needs allocated to them under the terms of the DfES Code of Practice¹. At three per cent, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the norm. All pupils have English as their first language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

North Newton Primary is a good school that serves its pupils and community well. It has no major weaknesses. It is very well led and managed. The headteacher, staff and governors work very well as a team, and have established a very positive and caring ethos that successfully supports and promotes pupils' learning. Excellent relationships, together with very good behaviour are the norm. Good teaching across the school results in pupils' very good attitudes to learning. Pupils' personal development is very good. Standards for pupils now in Year 6 are above nationally expected levels in English, mathematics, science and religious education. This represents good achievement when considering pupils' average attainment on entry to the school. Efficient use is made of time, money and resources. Although the unit cost per pupil is above average, this is an effective school that gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Achieves standards for pupils currently in Year 6 that are above average in English, mathematics, science, religious education and art.
- Provides good learning opportunities that are enhanced by a very good range of extracurricular activities and visits.
- Teaching is good across the school.
- Relationships are excellent and pupils display very good attitudes and behaviour.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs results in them achieving well.

What could be improved

In the context of this good school, there are no key issues regarding improvement. Aspects for further development include:

- Information within the school development plan to give clear details as to how standards will be improved.
- The assessment of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in information and communication technology (ICT).

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

¹ The Department for Education and Skills' Code of practice gives practical advice to schools about their responsibilities to ensure that all pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress in addressing the issues arising from the last inspection of July 1997. Teachers' planning is now underpinned by policies and schemes of work for each subject to ensure the systematic development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. There has been a marked improvement in the quality of teaching, which is now monitored regularly by the headteacher. Standards for pupils currently in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science, and, as such, are above those recorded at the time of the last inspection. Management of the curriculum is now delegated to individual teachers, who, as subject co-ordinators, monitor planning, resources and standards achieved. Marking of pupils' work is now good and reflects the consistent application of a marking policy introduced following the last inspection. The school has successfully introduced national strategies for literacy and numeracy, together with that for the performance management of teachers. Governors have overseen a number of structural changes and developments to the building together with the ongoing improvements in provision for information and communication technology.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores² in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	A	A	B
Mathematics	E	D	D	E
Science	E	D	B	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

In view of the small number of pupils in Year 6 assessed in 2001 results should be interpreted with caution.

Results of end of Year 2 assessments for 2001 showed all pupils achieved the expected levels³ in reading, writing, mathematics and science. When taking into account proportions gaining higher levels, overall attainment in reading and writing was very high; consistent with the top five per cent of schools nationally when compared with either national or similar school results. Performance was well above average for either forms of comparison in mathematics, and above average in science. Whilst care should be taken when making comparisons based on a small number of pupils, results reflect the steady rise in standards over the last three years in each subject, and are a noteworthy achievement when taking into account pupils' average attainment on entry. The smaller number of pupils assessed at Year 6, achieved standards in English well above the national average and above average in science. Although gains were made on results of the previous year, attainment in mathematics was below average.

Inspection evidence indicates overall attainment for pupils currently in Year 2 meets national expectations for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards for pupils

² Average points scores refers to the average of pupils' scores weighted by Ofsted for each level attained in each subject.

³ The national expectation is that, when assessed at the end of Year 2, pupils should achieve Level 2. The higher level is Level 3. When assessed at the end of Year 6, the expectation is that pupils achieve Level 4, with the higher level being Level 5.

now in Year 6 exceed nationally expected levels in English, mathematics and science. Variations in assessment results from year to year should be seen in the context of the small year groups involved. By the end of Years 2 and 6, attainment is above the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. At the end of Years 2 and 6, performance is consistent with nationally expected levels in ICT, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. Whilst standards in art meet expectations at the end of Year 2, they exceed them by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They are interested in their work and respond well to good teaching. This has a positive effect on the progress pupils make.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' very good behaviour allows maximum time to be spent on teaching and learning.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good. Relationships between pupils and amongst pupils and staff are excellent, and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
Attendance	Overall attendance is very high when compared with the national average. Pupils are punctual and keen to attend.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good with very good features	Good with very good features

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 good quality of teaching across the school has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Teaching of basic skills of literacy and numeracy is consistently good, with instances of very good teaching. Strengths lie in good planning, together with effective ongoing assessment to help determine what is to be taught next. Pupils know exactly what is expected of them because teachers explain clearly at the start of lessons. In literacy, teachers' enthusiasm and skilled questioning, together with interesting activities, are underpinned by good subject knowledge. Mathematics lessons contain enjoyable tasks that reinforce pupils' understanding of concepts taught. Pupils are challenged regularly through mental arithmetic sessions, and are given many opportunities to explain how they arrive at their answers. Teachers successfully meet the needs of pupils at different stages of learning, ranging from those with special educational needs, to higher attaining pupils. Teaching in lessons observed was never less than satisfactory.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good provision is made for children in reception. The curriculum for pupils between Years 1 and 6 is broad and balanced, and supported by a very good range of out of class activities and educational visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils receive good provision that is well managed. They make good progress in relation to prior attainment and targets in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Good provision is made for cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Child protection, together with procedures for health and safety are very good. Effective provision is made for monitoring the academic development of children in reception, and of pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science. Information gained from assessments is used very well. However, the school has yet to establish procedures to monitor pupils' knowledge and skills in ICT.

The school's very good partnership with parents makes a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives very good leadership and manages well. The very good support he receives from staff and governors results in the school having a very positive and caring ethos that supports and promotes pupils' learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body meets its statutory obligations fully. Governors are closely involved in strategic and financial planning, monitoring and evaluation. They have a good understanding of the school's provision for all aspects of the curriculum and standards achieved.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Effective use of data from statutory assessment to determine how the curriculum is to be modified in order to raise attainment. Appropriate procedures are in place to monitor the quality of teaching.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes efficient use of all resources to support learning. Governors apply the principles of 'best value' well at

every stage of planning and evaluation.

The school is sufficiently staffed to meet the needs of children in reception, for pupils in Years 1 to 6, and those who have special educational needs. Accommodation is adequate overall. Although the school does not have a hall or field of its own, effective use is made of nearby facilities. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory with strengths in English and ICT. The school gives good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils like coming to school, they are taught well and make good progress.• The school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best.• The school is well led and managed; it works closely with parents, and keeps them well informed of pupils' progress.• The school helps pupils become mature and responsible, and behaviour is good.• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with a question or a problem.• The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework given to pupils.

Twenty-three parents returned the Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaire, and sixteen parents attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector. Inspection evidence confirms the positive views expressed by parents. The inspection team is of the opinion that an appropriate amount of homework is provided for pupils, relative to their age and understanding.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Assessment of children on entry to school shows attainment to be broadly in line with that expected for their age. The school makes good provision for its young children. Those now in reception make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematical development. Satisfactory progress is made in knowledge and understanding of the world, physical, and creative development. Whilst nearly all children are on course to reach the officially recommended learning goals⁴ for each area of learning by the time they leave reception, a number of higher attaining children have already achieved these levels for personal, social and emotional development.

⁴ QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals' for children in this stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of six. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

2. End of Year 2 National Curriculum assessments from 1999 have shown a year-on-year improvement in all subjects, culminating in results for 2001 in which all pupils reached the expected levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science. When taking into account the proportions gaining the higher levels, overall attainment in reading and writing was very high when compared with either national results, or those of similar schools. Performance for both aspects of English was consistent with the top five per cent of schools nationally. Overall performance was well above national or similar school averages in mathematics, and above average in science. Such results are impressive when taking into account the average attainment on entry to the school. However, even when assessment results are positive, care should be taken when comparing results of small year groups with national results, as the performance of each pupil has a significant impact on statistics.

3. Results of the 2001 assessments for pupils at the end of Year 6, showed overall standards in English to be well above the national average, and above those of similar schools. Standards in science, in which all pupils reached the expected level, were above average overall, and in line with similar schools. Whilst a steady improvement was recorded in assessment results of all subjects since 1999, gains made in mathematics were insufficient to achieve results in line with national averages. Overall performance was below average and well below that of similar schools. However, as noted earlier, in such a small year group, the adverse performance of one pupil, who may have special educational needs, has a disproportionate effect on results. Analysis of assessment results in mathematics led to the implementation of a commercial scheme to support the National Numeracy Strategy, the setting of individual and group targets, together with in-service training targeted specifically towards aspects of work in number.

4. For pupils currently in Year 2, inspection evidence shows attainment in English, mathematics and science to be in line with nationally expected levels. At Year 6, where numbers are greater than last year, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. There are no marked differences in the performance of boys and girls.

5. In lessons observed, pupils' progress across Years 1 and 2 was satisfactory in terms of the development of their speaking and listening skills. At the end of Year 2, attainment in this aspect of English is average. Pupils talk sensibly about their work. They show confidence in asking and answering questions, and are keen to read aloud. Progress is good between Years 3 and 6. By the time pupils leave the school, standards are above average. Pupils listen attentively, make thoughtful contributions to discussions, and use a breadth of vocabulary, including subject specific terms, well.

6. In reading, good learning across the school results in standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 being above expectation. By Year 2, pupils read confidently and clearly, observing punctuation. By the end of Year 6, pupils read a wide range of texts with fluency and accuracy. They have a good understanding of how punctuation determines how text is to be read. They discuss character and plot, and talk about authors and favourite books confidently, giving considered reasons for their preferences.

7. Standards in writing are average at the end of Year 2. Good progress across Years 3 to 6 results in above average attainment at the end of Year 6. Pupils write for a range of purposes, and draft and edit their work. They make sound use of their developing writing skills when producing work in other subjects, including history and religious education. Pupils acquire good strategies for correct spelling, and make effective use of dictionaries and thesauruses to support writing. By the end of Year 6, the quality of handwriting is above average. Pupils write with a fluent and clear style, and work is presented well.

8. In mathematics, sound learning results in attainment meeting nationally expected levels at the end of Year 2. Good progress made between Years 3 and 6 results in those currently in Year 6 having standards that are above average. Throughout the school, mental arithmetic is developed well through regular 'mental agility' activities. Numeracy skills are used to good

advantage in science investigations when measuring and recording findings. Pupils measure and weigh in design and food technology, and refer to timelines in history.

9. At the end of Year 2, standards in science are average. Pupils make good progress between Years 3 and 6, which results in above average standards at the end of Year 6. Across the school, a strong emphasis is placed on investigative science. Pupils have a broad knowledge of science, and observe, experiment, predict and use the skills of scientific enquiry. They have a clear understanding of what makes a test 'fair', and use an increasing range of scientific language with confidence.

10. Across Years 1 to 6, pupils make sound progress in developing their skills of information and communication technology. At the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils apply their developing skills of ICT well in other subjects. Standards in religious education are above the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This represents good learning, with pupils having a good knowledge of Christian beliefs and other world faiths.

11. Pupils make satisfactory progress in design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. Standards for pupils at age seven and eleven are consistent with those expected for their ages. Whilst attainment in art and design meets expectations for pupils at the end of Year 2, it exceeds expected levels by the end of Year 6.

12. Regarding the several elements of pupils' personal development, by the end of Year 6 their spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Cultural development, that includes an understanding of the richness and diversity of cultures other than their own, is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to prior attainment and to targets in their individual education plans. Higher attaining pupils are provided with suitably challenging work and make satisfactory progress. In keeping with the school's good policy of inclusion, a small number of pupils, identified as being gifted or talented across a range of subjects, receive suitable provision and make sound progress.

13. Whilst results of the end of Year 6 assessments in English exceeded the targets set by the local education authority, they did not meet those set for mathematics. The school is now working towards challenging targets to ensure pupils currently in Year 6 achieve their full potential. The school has a positive attitude to raising standards, and the staff and governors work together to this common end.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. All pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school and are eager to join in with the many and varied activities provided for them. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning is very good, as is their behaviour throughout the school day. These positive features have a significant impact on the good progress pupils make. The school has built successfully on the good standards reported at the time of the last inspection to achieve this very high standard.

15. Children in the Foundation Stage⁵ (reception) join in enthusiastically with activities and are eager to respond to adults' questions. When playing and learning in the outdoor area they willingly change activities when asked, share and take turns sensibly. They play well with one another and join in with their Year 1 friends with confidence. During a music lesson children listened carefully to instructions, followed the teacher's lead and participated with eager anticipation in well known routines. They enjoyed the session with great excitement and pleasure.

16. Pupils from Year 1 through to Year 6 have very good attitudes to learning. Pupils are lively and bubbly, and enthusiastically embrace all opportunities for learning. They listen

⁵ The Foundation Stage refers to children from entry up to and including age six when they complete the reception year.

carefully; concentrate on tasks set for them and are well motivated by the high expectations of teachers. In a Class 3 ICT lesson pupils were very attentive and worked well individually and in pairs. They responded well to the teacher's high expectations and willingly 'had a go'. As a consequence they made good progress in their learning. Pupils respond well to challenge, for example pupils in Class 2 concentrated well when arranging words in alphabetical order during a literacy session and Class 3 pupils worked hard to find the next numbers in sequences. Pupils' interest in learning and improving their skills extends well beyond normal school hours, as many enjoy a very good range of extracurricular activities that includes sport and music.

17. Pupils behave very well throughout the school day. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the good standards of behaviour achieved by the school. Lunchtimes are sociable occasions when pupils are polite to each other and to visitors. At playtimes, pupils across the age range play together amicably. Older pupils welcome younger pupils into their games. Pupils are not concerned about bullying or aggressive behaviour and really enjoy playtimes. Pupils handle resources carefully and tidy up after themselves. They show great respect for each other and their school environment.

18. Excellent relationships underpin the family atmosphere of the school. Pupils are supportive of one another, for example helping each other when working on the computer, or encouraging their less athletic friends during physical education lessons. Pupils are sensitive to others' views and listen with interest when their friends are talking.

19. Pupils undertake responsibilities very sensibly. The oldest pupils help organise the music and overhead projector for assemblies and clear away after lunch – an important task as classrooms are used for dining. Pupils in Class 2 have monitor jobs and in all classes pupils organise their own resources and equipment and clear away after themselves. Overall, pupils' personal development is very good.

20. Parents say their children enjoy coming to school, and this is borne out by the very high attendance levels which are well above the national average; a very good achievement for a school of this size. Pupils arrive punctually in the morning and unauthorised absence is minimal. There have been no exclusions.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. Good teaching is a feature of this school. Teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better in all lessons observed. Overall, it was good in 55 per cent of lessons seen, and very good in a further 26 per cent. One lesson was excellent. This marks a considerable improvement to that reported in the previous inspection when three per cent were considered very good. All teachers and support staff work very well as a team, sharing good knowledge and expertise. The quality of teaching has a positive effect on pupils' learning and the standards they achieve.

22. Teaching of children in reception was judged to be good in four-fifths of lessons observed; the remainder was satisfactory. Planning is thorough and based on the recommended Early Learning Goals. It covers all required areas of learning for children in the reception year of the Foundation Stage, and links well with the early stages of the National Curriculum. Children are provided with a good range of relevant and interesting experiences. Good knowledge and understanding of the educational needs of the age group are reflected in the preparation and delivery of lessons, and in the careful monitoring of children's performance. Staff co-operate well in providing children with an appropriate balance between teacher directed activities and those children choose for themselves. Many opportunities are created to develop and extend children's language, and they are a marked feature of the good practice observed.

23. The quality of teaching of pupils in Years 1 to 6 was judged to be satisfactory or better in all lessons observed. It was good in over four-fifths of lessons, of which over three-tenths were very good, and a further lesson was excellent. Teachers have benefitted from a good programme of professional development, particularly in literacy, numeracy and, most recently, in ICT. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of subjects taught. Teachers are enthusiastic, and this contributes to positive, well managed classes. On many occasions, pupils' understanding is enhanced significantly by teachers' clear explanations and their effective demonstrations. For instance, in an ICT lesson, pupils were given clear step-by-step guidance on how to use e-mail to send a message with an attached file. In mathematics, pupils in Years 4 to 6 were given a very clear explanation of calculations involving negative numbers.

24. In nearly all lessons, teachers explain objectives clearly at the start to ensure pupils understand fully what they are expected to achieve. Teachers have suitably high expectations of pupils and give them good ongoing support and reassurance. A noteworthy feature in all lessons is the attention staff pay to good effort. Inspection evidence confirms parents' views that teachers know pupils' individual needs well, and plan for them accordingly. Within each class, pupils of different ages are given challenging tasks that are well matched to their stages of learning.

25. Across the school, classrooms are well organised to promote learning. Teachers were observed using a range of strategies, including individual, group and whole class teaching to good advantage. The use of questioning techniques by staff is very effective and has a positive effect on pupils' learning, especially speaking and listening skills. Particularly successful is the use of open questions that require pupils to consider and organise their thoughts before giving an explanation by way of response. For example, when pupils in Year 1 discussed the features of living things, a full and well structured reply was given to the question, "Why do you think a tree is living?" Another feature that impacts well on learning is teachers' encouragement of pupils to use correct vocabulary within lessons, particularly in mathematics and science. Good examples of both practices occur regularly at the end of lessons when pupils talk about what they learnt.

26. Teachers regularly recap on what pupils have learnt previously, and make effective use of time to advance learning. They often capture pupils' imagination by providing interesting activities such as when pupils in Years 5 and 6 use computers to design and produce leaflets to promote their favourite sport; or when Years 2 and 3 investigate whether toothpastes containing whiteners really do make teeth whiter. A significant contribution to the effective teaching observed came from the school's team of support assistants. They work in close partnership with teachers to enhance pupils' learning. Teachers ensure all those working with them have a clear understanding of the lesson objectives, together with the methods and resources to be used.

27. Teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. Individual education plans relate well to the needs of those for whom they are written. Staff use these plans well to meet specific needs. Teachers give clear instructions and use praise constructively. As a result of effective support such pupils make good progress in relation to prior attainment and to targets in their education plans. In keeping with the school's clear policy for inclusion, higher attaining pupils are provided with work well matched to their level of attainment.

28. Teaching of the literacy hour was consistently good, including one lesson judged very good. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives, using the structure of the National Literacy Strategy to good advantage. Interesting activities are provided for pupils, and good use is made of end of lesson discussion time. Lessons are characterised by the enthusiasm of teachers, expressive reading and leading of stories, and skilled questions to ensure pupils understand the content and structure of texts. Teaching of the daily mathematics lessons was good overall, including two in every five very good. Lessons are thoroughly planned with

interesting and relevant activities that reinforce pupils' understanding of concepts taught. In mental arithmetic sessions, pupils are challenged to think and use their recall of number with rapid response, and are given many opportunities to explain how they arrived at their answers.

29. Teachers' planning is good. Since the last inspection, the school has implemented schemes of work for all subjects to support the systematic development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Teachers make effective use of ongoing assessment to help plan what is to be taught next. The quality of marking, considered inconsistent at the time of the last inspection, is good. It reflects the consistent application of the school's marking policy introduced following the last inspection report. In addition to giving pupils good oral feedback during lessons, written marking acknowledges effort, and gives pupils clear guidance on how to improve their work. Although a small number of Ofsted pre-inspection questionnaires recorded parental concerns over homework, inspection evidence confirms teachers make satisfactory use of homework to support learning; the amount and challenge of work given is suitably matched to the age and capability of the pupils concerned.

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

30. The whole curriculum reflects the school's aims well. These are reflected in the very good provision for extracurricular activities and the good links with the community and the wider world. For example, all pupils in the school go swimming each week and the school is involved in services at the church and in sporting activities in the area. All of these make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Since the last inspection there has been a good improvement in the curriculum in that:

- There are now policies for all subjects and these are reviewed regularly;
- Nationally recommended guidelines and schemes of work now support planning for each subject;
- Resources for information and communication technology have improved considerably, and are used very well to enhance learning in other subjects;
- The literacy strategy has been implemented very effectively because of the extensive use of literacy in other subjects;
- The numeracy strategy has been introduced well.

31. As a result, teachers plan thoughtfully and precisely for the mixed age classes. They make good use of day-to-day assessment to ensure that tasks are matched carefully to pupils' ages and abilities. The effect of the very good management and teachers' hard work is evident in the upward trend in standards. Pupils build well on previous learning as they move through the school.

32. There is good provision for children in reception that covers all officially recommended areas of learning, and links well with the early stages of the National Curriculum. Since the last inspection, outdoor provision has been improved through the establishment of an 'Early Years Garden'; a secure area to support children's learning across all aspects of outdoor structured play.

33. The National Curriculum is taught in an interesting and stimulating way so that pupils achieve well overall. The school meets statutory requirements because all aspects of subjects are taught. Religious education is taught according to the locally agreed guidelines and collective worship meets requirements well. There are good links between many subjects, especially through aspects of literacy and ICT. For example, pupils write interesting letters of thanks to the monks who gave them an insight into the organisation of Glastonbury Abbey. This was part of their work in religious education and some letters were handwritten and others word processed.

34. Provision for special educational needs is good because of the high level of inclusion in lessons and the life of the school. Pupils receive specific help in numeracy and literacy and are supported well in other lessons. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs. Higher attaining pupils have challenging extension activities and their progress is monitored carefully.

35. The arrangements for extracurricular activities, both before and after school and through visits, are very good. They are of great benefit to pupils' learning. Pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 have residential visits that offer a wide range of academic and physical challenge, as well as providing very valuable opportunities for social and emotional development. Pupils learn to live with others in a different setting and benefit from their shared learning opportunities. Visits to museums, places of local interest or of particular relevance to an aspect of their studies, are planned very carefully. For example, pupils visit a supermarket to study the layout of the products and classify them. This is additional information to be used in mathematics and design and technology, as well as increasing pupils' geographical knowledge of the area and the origin of many products. Pupils stay to after-school study clubs and join in games of uni-hoc and cricket before school. They learn to play without direct intervention and solve problems, which prepares them well for team games.

36. All pupils benefit from a curriculum that meets their personal and social needs well and ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to experience all that the school offers. All pupils work and play well with others in the classroom and the playground. Good provision is made for personal, social and health education. This is based on the school's own programme for teaching good health topics and the recently introduced guidelines. There is a sensitive approach to sex education in which parents are fully involved and a very good initiative for drugs education. Years 5 and 6 pupils combine with other schools at a local comprehensive school for drugs awareness through drama workshops. This programme is followed up at school.

37. The personal development of pupils is of prime importance. Each class has regular opportunities for pupils to discuss and consider issues such as friendships, fears and concerns, when they sit quietly in a circle to share their feelings and thoughts with each other. There are good arrangements for the transfer of pupils to secondary schools and admission to reception from the playgroup. Curricular links with other schools are effective in supporting development of the curriculum. Good links with the community make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. For example, the school received professional support and advice when designing and constructing the delightful mosaic in the 'Early Years Garden'. People in the area attend concerts and productions, which are received very warmly because of the high standards achieved. All of these contacts enable the school to play a full part in the community.

38. The provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall. It is very good for spiritual, moral and social development and good for cultural development. The high standards seen at the last inspection have been maintained. Religious education, assemblies and services in the church and Wells Cathedral, make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils are calm and reflective in assemblies. They sing hymns with sincerity and appreciation because the quiet community atmosphere encourages this. Pupils consider the beauty of the world and the effects of pollution and environmental threats because they are encouraged to relate their learning to wider issues. Teachers ask questions to encourage pupils to think about people's feelings and actions and make connections between aspects of their learning. Curiosity, interest and appreciation are developed through for example, science and visits. In one thank you letter about the visit to Glastonbury Abbey a pupil wrote, "I loved the abbey because there were surprises in every corner." Displays around the school make a good contribution to the school's positive climate, in which pupils are able to mature, respect others and be respected.

39. A clear code of behaviour is consistently promoted throughout the school. Pupils know how the rules are to be applied in the classroom and playground and this promotes their moral and social development very successfully. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong. The school has worked hard to develop an environment in which pupils can express their views and consider moral aspects of people's behaviour. Pupils have time to reflect upon the moral values of people they hear about in stories. They believe that rewards and house points are worth earning, but they value the praise and encouragement that accompanies the rewards more than the rewards themselves. Pupils take a pride in their work and glow with pleasure when their efforts are recognised because they know the school values their efforts. Relationships are very good and adults provide pupils with very good examples on which to model their own behaviour.

40. The school's good policy for inclusion gives a strong basis for social development and it is put into practice very effectively. Partner and group work is part of most lessons. Pupils share ideas, discuss issues raised and support each other in joint tasks. Every pupil was involved in the construction of the mosaic and pupils worked well together on this delicate activity. All pupils and adults contributed to the attractive quilt of hands made for the Millennium project, which reinforces further the sense of belonging to a community. Pupils enjoy contributing to the life of the school. Year 6 pupils have many responsibilities, including clearing up after lunch and operating the overhead projector in assembly. Visits to museums and places of local interest provide positive links with the outside world and residential visits foster a sense of community. These experiences make a positive contribution to pupils' development and learning, as do involvement in polished performances at Christmas, and musical workshops and concerts.

41. The good provision for pupils' cultural development begins in religious education because pupils learn to value other cultures. This gives pupils important opportunities to broaden their knowledge and understanding of the multicultural nature of society, both here and in other countries. Pupils understand why each faith has symbols and traditions or festivals that are special to them. For example, through their study of Hinduism they know why and how Diwali is celebrated. Stories, music, art and literature are used sensitively throughout the school to extend pupils' knowledge and use of cultural language and imagery. Pupils become aware of the different rhythms of music from other countries. For example, they explore the exciting rhythm of the samba in drum workshops. Through visits to theatres, museums and churches they extend their cultural awareness. Maypole dancing gives pupils the opportunity to enjoy a very traditional experience.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. Pupils enjoy very good support and guidance from all adults in school. All staff are committed to ensuring that each child makes the progress they are capable of. Mutual respect between all belonging to the school community underpins the very supportive and caring ethos that permeates the school.

43. Very good attention is paid to matters of health and safety and child protection. The premises are checked regularly by the headteacher and governors, and care is taken on a day-to-day basis to identify any potential hazards. All necessary safety checks and fire drills are carried out regularly. Child protection procedures meet requirements. The school's policy and information provided for staff in the staff handbook ensures everyone is fully aware of their responsibilities. Pupils are supervised very well at all times during the school day, at breakfast club before school begins and after school during the many extracurricular activities. Arrangements for first aid are very well organised. Careful records are kept of any accidents and pupils' specific medical needs. A medical room is available.

44. The attention paid to ensuring high levels of attendance is excellent. Good use is made of computerised records, which means quick and informative analysis of pupils' records.

Parents are provided with mid-year attendance reports and encouraged to work with the school to improve their child's attendance if too much school time is lost. The headteacher makes it very clear how poor attendance can adversely affect a child's progress. Registration procedures fully meet all requirements.

45. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. A clear reward system is used throughout the school. Pupils' enjoy working to receive merits which are collected on a card as pupils work towards receiving bronze, silver and gold certificates. Successes of all kinds are celebrated by all during 'show' assemblies. The school has agreed procedures for dealing with any aggressive or inappropriate behaviour.

46. Parents expressing their views at the parents' meeting were very complimentary about the level of care and support their children receive. In their view they recognise this as a key strength in the small family nature of the school. This aspect of the school's work was reported on favourably at the time of the last inspection. It remains a strength of the school.

47. Assessments of pupils with special educational needs, or with special talents, are carried out thoughtfully. All who work with them are aware of pupils' targets and programmes. All staff know pupils very well and the very good relationships between adults and pupils ensure that learning takes place in a purposeful and inclusive atmosphere. Staff work together well to monitor and assess the work and progress of pupils with special educational needs and share information effectively. The school complies fully with the revised Code of Practice and liaises effectively with external agencies.

48. Assessment and recording procedures have improved since the last inspection. With the exception of ICT, the school now has good procedures for assessing and tracking the progress of individual pupils, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Teachers record pupils' progress regularly and systematically so that they know what each child has achieved in each aspect of each subject. However, the school is aware of the need to develop appropriate systems of assessment in ICT.

49. Very good use of information gained from assessments has led to pupils making good progress as they move through the school, and encourages pupils to achieve higher standards of work. For example, the school identified the need for pupils to have formal handwriting and spelling practice into Year 6. As a result, pupils' work is presented well, pupils take pride in their writing and presentation, and many pupils achieve higher standards than usual in writing and spelling at the end of Year 6. Individual targets, which match well with the individual achievements of each pupil, are used effectively in mathematics. This enhances the quality of the assessment procedures used by teachers and gives pupils valuable opportunities to develop insights into their own learning. The school plans to extend the use of such targets to English.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. The partnership with parents and their active involvement in the life of the school is a significant factor in the school's success. Parents' response to the Ofsted questionnaire and their comments at the parents' meeting confirm their satisfaction with the work of the school. Overall information provided for parents is good. This was another of the school's positive features reported on at the time of the last inspection, which has been maintained and built upon effectively since that time.

51. Parents receive very good information about daily life at North Newton. Good notice of events and activities ensure parents are fully informed about all happenings. Newsletters give clear information and are attractively presented because the school administrator gives careful thought to this important aspect of communicating effectively with parents. The prospectus and governors annual report to parents meet requirements and give prospective

parents a good overview of the work of the school. A school website is now available offering parents another valuable way of keeping in touch with what is happening in school. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are fully involved in the monitoring and review of their child's targets within individual education plans, and have frequent opportunities to discuss these. A few parents commented that they would like more information about what their child will be learning. Information about the curriculum is brief in the prospectus and although a curriculum plan has been provided for parents in the past a more informal approach is now taken. Class teachers tend to inform parents about specific activities rather than give a full overview for the term or year.

52. Parents feel well informed about their child's progress. Good quality written reports are provided towards the end of the school year. These give good illustrations of how each child has made progress in all areas of the curriculum. Targets for further improvements are clearly identified. Parents are invited to a formal consultation meeting with their child's teacher twice a year. As well as these formal opportunities, parents are encouraged to come into school at any time if they have concerns. All parents responding to the Ofsted questionnaire agree (and 91 per cent strongly agree) that they feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. The school takes parents' views very seriously and has recently carried out its own survey and has already taken action to address some of the individual concerns raised.

53. Parents' supportive and active involvement in the life of the school and their child's learning has a positive impact on the standards pupils achieve. When children are first learning to read, parents give very good support and hear their child read regularly. Many make useful and regular comments to the teacher through the home-school reading record book. Class 1 reading record books are monitored effectively by the classroom assistant almost every day so the most can be gained from the communication between the school and parents. Clear information about homework and how parents can support their child's learning at home is provided. A number of parents help in classes or with specific activities. Some provide transport for swimming or trips out of school. All this help and support is greatly appreciated by the staff of the school. The Parent Teacher and Friends Association (PTFA) is very active and raises significant funds each year which are used carefully to enhance learning opportunities and facilities for pupils. The school gains much from its very successful partnership with parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. As reported at the time of the last inspection, the headteacher gives very good leadership. He sets a very clear direction for the school's development, based on his thorough understanding of the needs of pupils. This has led to standards for the small number of pupils assessed at the end of Years 2 and 6 improving considerably, particularly in the last three years. The headteacher is given very good support by a hard working staff, who, along with the governing body, have a strong commitment to providing quality education. This has resulted in the school having a clear set of aims and values that are reflected in its day-to-day life. Together, staff and governors have successfully created a very caring and supportive ethos that reflects fully the school's mission statement: 'To create a safe, caring, happy and well-ordered environment where everybody's contribution is valued, and all members of the school community work together towards their full potential'.

55. Together with the governing body, the headteacher manages the school very well. Day-to-day management and organisation are good. Roles and responsibilities are well defined, and staff have specific management responsibilities that support the school well. Written communication regarding all aspects of school life is regular and informative. This aspect of management is undertaken well, has a positive impact on pupils' attainment, and is appreciated by parents.

56. In response to the findings of the last inspection, each member of the teaching staff now takes responsibility for co-ordinating subjects and aspects of school life. In addition to being fully involved in planning and resourcing, staff evaluate pupils' standards in the subjects for which they are responsible. The headteacher now monitors regularly the quality of teaching across the curriculum; in so doing, the school has addressed a further issue from the last inspection.

57. There is regular and productive communication between headteacher and chair of governors. The governing body is supportive and committed to raising standards, including its own. As such, governors undertake a range of self evaluation activities to determine how they too can improve performance. In addition to discussing subject policies, documents and assessment data, governors have oversight of subjects. Through visiting, observing and working alongside pupils, collectively, governors have a good understanding of the school's curriculum provision and standards achieved.

58. The preparation of the school development plan is well managed, with governors and staff successfully involved. The resulting document is clear and well structured. It establishes relevant priorities, responsibilities and resource requirements, together with criteria that will be used to evaluate success. However, although the plan is a useful tool for development, targets do not relate in sufficient detail to raising standards or to the specific actions to be taken to improve levels of attainment. The provision of in-service training associated with the plan's targets, together with agreed personal development resulting from performance management targets for teachers, is well managed by the headteacher in his capacity as staff development co-ordinator.

59. The governing body meets its statutory obligations fully, including those relating to a daily act of collective worship. The school has good procedures that comply with the new Special Educational Needs Code of Practice⁶ for the identification and provision for pupils with special educational needs, and ensures good equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils. The school has a helpful policy that informs the management of special educational needs. As special educational needs co-ordinator, the headteacher carries out his duties well, liaising appropriately with teachers, support staff and outside agencies.

60. The school is sufficiently staffed with suitably qualified teachers for the number and age of pupils on roll. Good procedures are in place to support newly qualified teachers or those new to the school. A clear and helpful staff handbook provides further support for short-term and supply staff. Since the last inspection, good procedures have been introduced for the performance management of staff. Teachers are given very good assistance by skilled learning support staff who are deployed well and give valuable support for pupils' learning. Teamwork throughout the school is of a very high standard. Staff responsible for administration, premises upkeep and school meals are efficient and contribute well to the smooth running of the school.

61. The overall level of accommodation is adequate for the delivery of areas of learning for children in reception, and for subjects of the National Curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Although not having a hall or playing field, curriculum requirements for physical education are met through the appropriate use of the nearby village hall and sports field. The school's largest classroom allows daily acts of worship to take place with minimal disruption. Attractive displays of pupils' work enhance all rooms and have a positive impact on pupils' learning and their feelings of being valued. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory in all subjects, with strengths in English and information and communication technology. Since the last inspection, the school has established a secure and inviting 'Early Years Garden' which children of reception age use to good advantage, particularly when entering into imaginative play with friends.

⁶ The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice, published by the Department for Education and Skills, became effective as from January 1st 2002. It replaced the Code of practice published in 1994.

62. The standards of financial planning and management are good. An audit undertaken on behalf of the local authority shortly before the inspection, found the school's financial controls to be very good. The audit raised very few minor recommendations for improvement. Governors are closely involved in budgetary matters and are given further guidance through employing the services of an education finance officer from the local authority. All expenditure is carefully targeted and used appropriately. At the time of inspection, the school's 'carry forward' from the previous year's budget was in excess of recommended levels. However, discussions with governors and headteacher confirm it included sums allocated for an appropriate range of initiatives and development, as well as funds held on behalf of the local cluster of schools. In keeping with the school's good application of the principles of 'best value', all spending decisions are evaluated for cost effectiveness.

63. Although the school's unit cost per pupil is above average, when taking into account:

- Attainment on entry, and the good added value in terms of performance when pupils leave at the end of Year 6;
- The quality of the school as a community and the education it provides;
- The efficient deployment of staff and use of resources;

North Newton Primary School gives good value for money. Whilst this judgement is consistent with that of the previous inspection, it should be viewed in the context of heightened expectations now held regarding school performance.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. There are no key issues for the school to address. However, in the context of its strengths, the following minor points for improvement should be considered:

- Developing further the school improvement plan, to show more clearly the prioritised and specific actions to be taken in order to raise pupils' attainment.

(Paragraph: 58.)

- Implementing a 'whole school' approach for the assessment of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding in information and communication technology.

(Paragraphs: 48, 125.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

31

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

8

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	8	17	5	0	0	0
Percentage	3	26	55	16	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

77

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

0

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

6

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

1

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

1

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

School data

3.5

Unauthorised absence

%

School data

0.2

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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	7	4	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Total	11	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

In view of the small number of pupils involved, the table showing the proportions reaching the expected levels in statutory assessments for 2001 is not published.

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	63
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	25.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	78

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/201
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	£
Total income	198204
Total expenditure	187970
Expenditure per pupil	2725
Balance brought forward from previous year	6905
Balance carried forward to next year	17139

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0.4

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	77
Number of questionnaires returned	23

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	26	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	35	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	43	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	52	13	0	0
The teaching is good.	78	22	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	74	22	4	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	91	9	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	78	22	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	52	48	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	83	17	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	78	22	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	78	22	0	0	0

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

65. At present, 14 children are in reception. They share a class with pupils in Year 1. Children enter reception at the start of the school year in which they become five. Nearly all attend pre-school groups before joining the school. Assessment on entry to school showed overall attainment of children currently in reception to be broadly in line with that expected for children of this age. The school makes good provision for its young children. Teaching is good overall, and children benefit from a curriculum that provides a good range of interesting and relevant activities for each required area of learning, well matched to children's different stages of learning. Whilst nearly all children are on course to reach the officially recommended levels in each area of learning by the end of reception, a small number of higher attaining children have already achieved the expected levels for personal, social and emotional development.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. Children's progress in personal, social and emotional development is good. Staff are extremely sensitive to the needs of children in their early years of schooling. They successfully create a happy and purposeful atmosphere where children settle quickly into the routines of school. Children work together in a friendly and supportive manner, and show respect for each other, friends and visitors. Sensitive talk and guidance from adults helps children understand the difference between right and wrong, and reinforces their understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. This strategy results in children being well behaved, able to show growing independence in making sensible choices from a range of activities, and sustain concentration when working. Children take part in a good number of self chosen and adult led activities, and handle resources with care. Where staff set up activities that require children to share or take turns, children do so willingly. Adults give well paced, clear instructions. As a result, children listen to what they are told, follow instructions well, and begin activities eagerly. Children are sensitive to the needs of others and show much pleasure in friends' successes as well as their own.

67. Teachers' planning successfully provides many opportunities for the development of children's self esteem, confidence and independence. This was shown well during a circle time lesson in which the children explored what a friend is, and why we need them, each child was required to say something positive about others in the class. Children carry out their class helper and monitor responsibilities well. In all activities, staff give children good encouragement and praise for noteworthy effort. Children line up and move around the school, and journey to the nearby village hall for physical activities in a sensible manner. They undress and dress themselves with increasing speed and ability. A variety of food technology activities reinforce children's awareness of the importance of washing hands before handling food.

Communication, language and literacy

68. Children make good progress in this area of learning. They have many planned opportunities to talk and listen to adults and to each other, in groups or as a whole class. For example, they listen attentively, and, when required, answer questions about, or join in with, the story of 'Handa's Surprise'. The use of talk and questioning by staff is effective, and the many opportunities created to develop and extend children's language are a marked feature of the good practice observed. Children demonstrate growing confidence when answering questions. They retell known stories accurately, and successfully predict what is going to happen in new stories they have read to them. Communication skills are developed further as

when during the inspection, children retold stories to a small but attentive audience of soft toys and dolls.

69. Carefully chosen stories are used well to help children recognise an increasing number of words in familiar contexts. Through a well structured and taught programme of phonics, children recognise the letters of the alphabet, and associate sounds with them. Whilst a number of higher attaining children confidently read texts from the reading scheme, others use picture clues and their developing phonic ability to help them enjoy stories. Children develop good book skills and enjoy sharing books and following the texts of pre-recorded story tapes.

70. Children undertake much 'pretend' writing as part of their activities in their role play and writing areas, where they make lists, write cards and take down messages. Whilst during the inspection, children wrote, with assistance, sentences telling their favourite part of a story read to them, a review of work for children now in Year 1, confirms that by the end of reception, most children write simple sentences unaided. Children are taught the correct way to shape letters, and copy examples of writing with increasing control.

Mathematical development

71. Mathematical development is good. Children count and recognise numbers to ten, many to 20 and beyond. They count forwards and backwards to work out how many are present or absent. Children sing and play a range of number rhymes and finger games, and put together number puzzles and jigsaws to reinforce learning. Through a variety of carefully directed activities, children develop their understanding of addition and subtraction. They sort objects in a variety of ways, for instance, by colour, shape and size; by threading objects and repeating patterns.

72. Children use correct mathematical language for simple shapes. In an observed lesson, following a recap on different shapes, children went on a 'shape walk' around the school to find and identify a range of shapes including circle, square, triangle and rectangle. They compare measurements of length and height, and, when using the see-saw in the 'Early Years Garden', they investigate differences in their weight. Children use vocabulary such as 'more than' and 'less than', and arrange objects in size order. They develop an awareness of capacity and volume through play tasks with sand and water. In so doing, they use quantitative words such as 'full' and 'empty'. Throughout all activities, adults work directly with children to support, reassure, question and praise.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. Although little direct teaching of this area of learning was observed, review of work shows a wide range of purposeful activities are planned that enable children to make satisfactory progress. Children observe and discuss weather, and understand why we wear different clothes for each season. They develop an awareness of place when walking and studying the layout of the school. Children's understanding of chronology is helped by them making a visual timeline enabling them to consider the many ways they have changed since they were babies. They understand the difference between living and non-living things and, during the inspection, carried out a range of well planned and managed investigations related to their senses. Children receive a sound introduction to 'design and make' activities. Appropriate provision for activities relating to food technology gives children satisfactory opportunities for observation, language development and preparation skills. Good opportunities are given for pupils to develop skills of information and communication technology. They handle computers with growing confidence to enjoy interactive programs, and to use the mouse to control, colour and move items on screen.

Physical development

74. Children make satisfactory progress in their fine manipulative skills. They handle tools, scissors, paintbrushes, construction kits and malleable materials safely and with increasing control. In an indoor activity lesson, children showed satisfactory control of movement as they moved at different speeds, changed directions, and held a balanced position. Children co-operated well with each other when playing a range of parachute games⁷. Such lessons are well managed. Adults have suitably high expectations of children's performance, and praise is used well to encourage and acknowledge good effort. In outdoor structured play, children enjoy an appropriate range of wheeled toys, which they use with increasing control of speed and direction. During the inspection, children were observed using a large play structure that had become the bridge of a pirate ship, enabling them to enter into imaginative play with friends. In all activities, children show growing confidence, together with a willingness to share and take turns.

Creative development

75. Progress in this area of learning is satisfactory. Children use a range of media to draw, paint, print and make models. They create many small imaginary environments and act out scenes in them, exploring ideas and feelings. They have good opportunities for structured role play, with adults often supporting activities. During the week of inspection, in addition to children working in a home corner, they were observed dressing in African costume to re-enact the role of Handa and her friend from the story 'Handa's Surprise' that they had enjoyed during literacy lessons. Children enjoy singing songs from memory; they sing enthusiastically, tunefully, and with a developing sense of rhythm.

76. Provision for children in reception is well managed. Good procedures are in place to support children's induction into reception. A helpful policy and scheme of work supports planning for the six areas of learning. An initial assessment of children's skills and understanding is carried out shortly after entry and provides information that is then used to inform subsequent planning and teaching. Children's development in learning is aided by careful observations and record keeping, and ongoing assessment.

ENGLISH

77. Inspection evidence shows standards at age seven match nationally expected levels in writing and are above national expectations in reading. By age eleven, pupils attain standards above average in English and achieve well because of the high quality teaching and the interesting activities that are matched well to pupils' abilities. This enables pupils to consolidate and extend their learning effectively as they move through the school. Results in National Curriculum assessments for seven year olds in 2001 were very high in comparison with national and similar school averages. They were above typical levels for eleven year olds. However, interpretation of the results is difficult because of the small number of pupils involved each year. The results of one pupil, or any pupils with special educational needs, can affect the overall outcome significantly. There has been an upward trend in standards in both reading and writing since 1999 and this has been maintained this year. No significant differences were observed between the performance of boys and girls during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school because of the good teaching and sensitive support they receive.

78. There have been good improvements in English since the last inspection. This is because:

- The literacy strategy has been implemented very effectively;

⁷ In these activities, children stand holding a large piece of circular material ~ the parachute. Activities that take place above, under and around the parachute include those to develop team work, confidence, agility and control, as well as a sense of fun.

- There is planned use of literacy in other subjects;
- Resources for the literacy hour have been developed well;
- Thorough analysis of all test data throughout the year and the tracking of pupils' progress ensures that tasks are matched well to pupils' abilities;
- Good records are kept of the range of books read by pupils.

The school is now planning to develop the use of individual targets for pupils in English.

79. Standards in speaking and listening at seven are similar to those expected nationally. Pupils improve their listening skills because teachers ensure pupils' full concentration at the start of lessons. They speak very clearly to pupils and listen to all that they say very carefully. Some pupils find it difficult to wait for their turn to speak because they are so keen to contribute. Teachers work hard to encourage pupils to respond to questions appropriately and extend simple answers skilfully. The very good relationships and supportive atmosphere in the classroom enable pupils to make good progress and contributions in most lessons. This helps to develop the confidence of those who are shy or have lower prior attainment. Some lessons are planned very carefully to provide specific opportunities for pupils to listen to each other and ask questions or express their views about for example, "What makes a good friend?"

80. Speaking and listening skills develop well as pupils move through the school, and, at the age of eleven, standards are above average. Teachers build on the progress pupils have made in the development of language skills. Skilful questions produce relevant and correct deductions about the texts read and pupils predict what may happen next in the story. Pupils use technical and specific language confidently, for example in music and science. They volunteer to read out their work at the end of the lesson. Pupils give their opinion of artists' work, explaining to the teacher that the use of blocks of colour and wavy lines gives movement to the water in David Hockney's picture and the use of lines around the central figure suggests movement in another painting. Pupils have very good opportunities to practise speaking in discussions about issues in literacy and religious education lessons, and enjoy the performing arts.

81. Attainment in reading is above that expected of pupils at both seven and eleven. Skilled teaching of letter sounds and patterns enables pupils to read simple texts by themselves, so that they make good progress with reading. Higher attaining pupils discover enjoyment in rhyming words and all pupils are proud to take their reading books home. Parents support pupils' reading very well and the support of helpers to hear pupils read is much appreciated. Pupils take advantage of every opportunity to sit and look at books in the book corner. Pupils in Year 2 have positive attitudes towards reading and talk happily about their favourite books. Many have favourite authors and give reasons for their choice. They read fluently, using their voice well to add interest to the story. Pupils know the importance of punctuation when reading and that commas are frequently needed to make sense of some passages. When asked, "When is it useful to use the alphabet?" pupils reply, "It helps us to find things quickly." Pupils show that they can use the alphabet to find information in books and texts. The teacher very carefully ensures that the level of difficulty and challenge in the task matches the ability levels of the pupils. Pupils know how to use the index, contents list and glossary in books.

82. By the age of eleven, the number of pupils reading at a higher level is rising due to good teaching of basic reading skills and an encouragement to read widely for pleasure and information. In a debate about the need for books now that so many people use computers, a majority of pupils report that they read regularly at home. They suggest that books have many advantages over a computer. For example, "You can curl up in an armchair with a book!" Pupils know how to find information from books in the library and use the Internet as an additional source of information.

83. Whilst at the age of seven, pupils' standards in writing are in line with what is expected nationally, good progress made across Years 3 to 6 results in standards at age eleven that are above expected levels. Many pupils learn a joined script in Year 2 and they enjoy using speech, question and exclamation marks in their writing. They welcome opportunities to use capital letters for emphasis. Pupils look for more interesting words in their writing. They write a range of letters, stories, poems, book reviews and instructions. They use these skills well in other subjects for example, writing a letter about a visit to a synagogue in religious education, or instructions for making items in design and technology. Pupils enjoy using whiteboards during literacy lessons, sometimes for spellings and on other occasions for activities such as putting words into alphabetical order.

84. By the age of eleven pupils have developed a well formed and legible style of handwriting. Weekly handwriting practice in all year groups ensures that pupils write and present their work very well. Most pupils spell words correctly first time, and, if they are doubtful, they use a dictionary so that they do not spoil the presentation of their work. Pupils write for a very wide range of purposes and by the end of Year 6 complete a variety of comprehension exercises and interesting stories with good dialogue. Pupils consistently produce work that is well written and shows care taken with spellings of specific vocabulary in subjects such as science, history and religious education. Work is frequently word processed directly to screen and pupils give the same degree of attention and care to this work. All are confident in use of the spell checking facility when they realise any spellings are incorrect.

85. Pupils' attitudes in English are very good because teachers plan and prepare interesting lessons well. They are keen to contribute to lessons and work sensibly in pairs or groups because they know the teachers' expectations of moving quickly into their groups and settling to work straight away. Pupils work without direct supervision and concentrate on their task well in a good learning atmosphere.

86. Teaching is good and frequently very good. As a result, pupils build on their learning well. Teachers plan very carefully to ensure that lessons build on previous learning for pupils in each of the year groups in the classes. This helps to maintain the high quality of learning and reinforces many reading and writing skills very effectively. Teachers prepare activities that are challenging and enjoyable, and are clear about what pupils are expected to learn in the lessons. Learning support assistants work very well with teachers and give good levels of support. For example, in one lesson, the support assistant wrote pupils' suggestions on the board whilst the teacher continued to ask pupils questions. This ensured the good pace of the lesson was maintained. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and this provides a warm, supportive learning atmosphere for pupils. Teachers ask questions skilfully and this encourages pupils to contribute to discussions and to extend their answers and thinking. The marking of pupils' work is good. This reinforces the teachers' expectations of quality of work and presentation, and helps pupils to make progress and grow in confidence.

87. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented very well. Pupils use the library and the Internet sensibly. Information and communication technology is used very well in all aspects of the subject. Co-ordination of English is good and information from assessment is used very well to ensure that work is matched well to pupils' individual abilities. There are good resources to support teaching and learning. Opportunities for drama are used well in lessons and public performances. Pupils benefit greatly from these. English supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well because of the wide range of literature used in lessons and the opportunities for working and planning together.

MATHEMATICS

88. Results of end of Year 2 National Curriculum assessments for 2001 showed the proportion of pupils gaining either the expected or higher levels to be well above the national

average. Performance was well above average when compared with similar schools. Attainment for the small number of pupils assessed at Year 6 showed that whilst the proportion reaching the expected level was well below national norms, that gaining the higher level was average. In view of the small number of pupils involved at either year, but more particularly at Year 6, assessment results cannot be relied on to give a true picture of the school's performance when matched against those of national or similar schools. Nor can they be used with confidence for year to year comparisons as the performance of each pupil has a significant impact on overall results. However, although there has been steady improvement over the last three years, overall performance as indicated by Year 6 assessment results, has been consistently below average. In order to improve the situation, staff:

- Implemented a new commercial scheme to support the National Numeracy Strategy;
- Underwent further specific in-service training;
- Introduced individual and group pupil targets in numeracy.

89. Inspection evidence confirms pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress, and, as at the time of the last inspection, standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with those expected nationally. Progress is good between Years 3 and 6, resulting in standards for the pupils now in Year 6, a group larger than that of last year, being above those expected for pupils of their age. This is an improvement on the last inspection. No significant difference is noted regarding the performance of boys and girls. As a result of good support, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Scrutiny of pupils' work, together with a review of teachers' planning, shows provision meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Through providing many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively, the subject makes a significant contribution to pupils' moral and social development.

90. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of place value of numbers to 100. They clearly explain the value of each digit. Pupils are competent with addition and subtraction, and apply what they have learnt to problems involving money. Pupils collect a range of information from their classmates, including favourite programmes, foods and pets. They use this data to produce graphs that they interpret through questions and answers. Pupils understand multiplication is repeated addition, and use the 2, 3, 5 and 10 times multiplication tables to work out multiplication tasks. Pupils work with simple fractions; halves and quarters, calculating fractions of shapes and number. Most read the time on analogue clocks to tell the hour, half past, and a quarter past and to the hour. Pupils have a secure understanding of reflective symmetry, and use mathematical vocabulary to describe and classify two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils have good opportunities to explain how they arrive at answers, and respond well to teachers' quick fire questions at the start of lessons.

91. By the end of Year 6, pupils have accurate recall of multiplication tables, and carry out mental calculations at speed. They choose appropriate number operations together with suitable methods of calculation to solve problems. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the relationship between fractions, percentages and decimal numbers, and use this to good advantage when solving problems. Pupils have a secure understanding of negative numbers, and undertake a range of calculations involving them. Activities relating to probability and data handling give pupils a clear understanding of the terms average, mode, and mean, and of the 'impossible-certain' probability continuum. Pupils use their ICT skills to good advantage when making effective use of graphs and pie charts to handle and interpret information. Scrutiny of work indicates pupils work to a high level on co-ordinates, rotational symmetry and translation of shapes and nets. Pupils know and construct a range of angles and triangles with accuracy, and show a good understanding of the properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes which they draw and use to calculate perimeter and area. Pupils apply their numeracy skills to good advantage across the curriculum,

particularly in science when they calculate results and produce tallies, tables and graphs to illustrate results, and in geography when working with map co-ordinates and scales. Pupils use their skills of measuring and weighing in several aspects of design and food technology, and refer to timelines in history.

92. The quality of mathematics teaching is consistently good, being judged very good in two in every five lessons observed. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and of pupils' needs. Lessons are well planned with a range of interesting activities, with pupils' different stages of learning well provided for in both questioning, practical and written elements. Lessons follow the recommendations of the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils are keen to answer the brisk and challenging questions at the beginning of each lesson. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance, and, as a result, pupils are attentive and well behaved. This ensures time is used well. Lessons build well on what pupils have learnt earlier, and explanations are very clear; as when pupils in Year 3 are given guidance on how to extend complex patterns with more than a single line of symmetry. Teachers' very good relationships with pupils make lessons bright, friendly and very effective. Teachers correct pupils' mistakes sensitively and give much praise and ongoing reassurance. This results in pupils growing in confidence and responding without fear of failure. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Good questioning encourages pupils to think for themselves and explain how they work out their answers.

93. The subject is well managed with appropriate documentation in place to support teachers' planning. Standards are monitored on a regular basis through work sampling, and the headteacher monitors the quality of teaching. Pupils are assessed at the end of units of study to evaluate what they know and can do, and results of end of year assessments are reviewed in order to monitor and modify curriculum provision, and track the ongoing performance of individual pupils. As a consequence, the needs of individuals or groups of pupils can be addressed quickly.

SCIENCE

94. Results of end of Year 2 National Curriculum teacher assessments for 2001 in science showed a very high proportion of pupils reached the expected level, consistent with the top five per cent of schools nationally. An above average proportion achieved the higher level. Statutory assessment for the small number of pupils at Year 6 showed a similarly high proportion reaching the expected level, with an above average proportion gaining the higher level. When compared with similar schools, performance was average. However, when considering the small number of pupils involved in assessments, results cannot be relied on to give a secure comparison with national results, those of similar schools, or from one year to another. However, over the last three years, there has been a year-on-year improvement in overall performance as assessed at the end of both Years 2 and 6.

95. Inspection evidence confirms that, as previously reported, attainment for pupils currently at the end of Year 2 meets national expectations. Standards for pupils now in Year 6 are above those expected nationally for pupils of their age, and, as such, this represents an improvement on the findings of the last inspection. Scrutiny of pupils' work, together with a review of teachers' planning, shows provision meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through Years 1 and 2. They make good progress from Years 3 to 6. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and make good progress in relation to prior attainment. No significant differences in attainment were noted between the performance of boys and girls. Across the school, investigative science is undertaken well. Pupils observe, experiment, predict and use the skills of scientific enquiry effectively. They observe well, record their findings, and, particularly in Years 3 to 6, offer well informed and reasoned explanations for what they have observed.

96. By the end of Year 2, pupils know the features of living things, and understand that different species of animals are found in different localities and habitats. They know and name the main parts of the human body, and of plants. Through conducting a series of investigations, pupils develop a clear understanding of their senses and their importance to us in everyday life. Pupils work confidently with a range of materials that they classify according to a range of criteria. They demonstrate their understanding of living and non-living things, of natural and man-made objects, and of items attracted by magnets and those that are not. Pupils understand the use of electricity, construct simple circuits, and investigate which materials are electrical conductors, and those that are insulators. They have a good understanding of what makes a test 'fair'. For example, when investigating which of two toothpastes was more effective in removing stains from a tile, pupils devised a number of ways to ensure their investigations were undertaken in a fair manner.

97. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a clear understanding of the major body systems and main organs, particularly the cardiovascular system and the workings of the heart. Pupils understand the importance of the skeleton, and how muscles work to help our movement. They appreciate the importance of a varied and balanced diet, and carry out investigations to analyse the nutritional content of several foods. In order to demonstrate their understanding of the importance of exercise for keeping healthy, pupils use their computer skills to good advantage to research and produce informative leaflets as to how and why their favourite sport contributes to physical and mental well being. Pupils understand what plants require for healthy growth. A range of activities relating to solids, liquids and gases gives pupils a good knowledge of reversible and irreversible changes of state. Pupils' activities involving saturated solutions provide pupils with a secure understanding of filtration, evaporation and condensation. Pupils have a clear understanding of friction, gravity and air resistance as forces. Through constructing electrical circuits that are in series, then parallel, pupils understand and explain the effect each has on the brightness of bulbs placed within each type of circuit.

98. Pupils' attitudes to science are very good. They show much interest and enthusiasm, discuss their work sensibly, sustain concentration and become thoroughly involved in what they are doing. Pupils collaborate well during investigations, and handle equipment with care. They benefit from the many opportunities that allow them to find things out for themselves, and make decisions based on observation and investigation.

99. Teaching was judged to be good or better in all lessons observed, including a third that were very good. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is good. Teachers plan a sequence of activities with clear learning objectives that challenge all pupils well. A particular feature of the good practice observed is the use of open ended questions to elicit responses and prompt further enquiry. Specific scientific vocabulary is introduced and used well. Day-to-day assessment is used to good advantage in helping to plan what is to be taught next, and, at the end of each topic staff make clear assessments of what pupils know and can do. End of year assessments are analysed to monitor and modify curriculum provision and help track individual pupils' performance.

100. Science often acts as a stimulus for other areas of the curriculum, including observational drawing and writing skills. It plays an important part in helping develop pupils' skills of speaking, listening and questioning. Effective use is made of pupils' skills of ICT. Much use is made of approved Internet sites and encyclopaedic programs to research and illustrate information. Pupils use computers and data handling programs to good advantage in order to report and illustrate findings of investigations. The subject contributes greatly to pupils' social development through providing many opportunities for collaborative learning.

101. The subject is well managed. A clear and helpful policy, together with a thorough scheme of work provides effective support for staff in their planning. The quality of learning is

monitored regularly through work sampling, with the headteacher monitoring the quality of teaching. The school's capacity to develop further with the current co-ordinator is good.

ART AND DESIGN

102. At the end of Year 2, pupils' performance is in line with national expectations in art. Pupils build well on their skills so that, by the end of Year 6, standards are above expected levels. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve at least satisfactorily because of the careful planning of activities, and the systematic development of skills in observational drawing as pupils move through the school.

103. By the time they are seven pupils use a wide range of paints, pens, pencils and collages to create interesting figures and portraits. They draw and paint with good skills in use of colour and brush. Pupils in Year 2 produce very good drawings of flowers. Paintings show that pupils are developing their observational skills very well. Pupils blend colour very effectively to make petals appear lifelike. They paint bold pictures of events and scenes from World War II and paint the clocks and walls for their design and technology project carefully. Pupils sketch buildings thoughtfully and drawings of animals are shaded very effectively because of careful use of pencils to give tone and depth to their work. Pupils make good use of their sketchbooks to practise skills and try out their ideas.

104. Seven to eleven year olds are taught skills systematically. They use their sketchbooks thoughtfully to revise their ideas and practise techniques, such as blending chalk and charcoal to produce interesting features for drawings of three-dimensional shapes. Their work shows an increasing understanding of how to give form and depth to still life drawings. Very good pencil drawings of three-dimensional shapes are developed into well observed sketches in charcoal and chalk of objects such as vases. Pupils paint items of sports equipment in colour very carefully, before attempting mature still life pictures of groups of bats and other objects. Their large paintings of fruit in the style of Georgia O'Keefe are completed with the simplicity and clarity of the artist's work. Pupils capture the subtle tones and detail of her work very accurately. Pupils consider the work of a wide range of artists. They think of the ways in which artists such as Edward Munch and David Hockney portray movement in their pictures. Pupils identify clearly the ways in which the artists have succeeded, and create very interesting pastel sketches of their own.

105. Pupils enjoy their work in art and look forward to lessons. Several pupils in Years 2 and 3 consider that one of the best aspects of the visit to Glastonbury was that they were able to sketch what they saw. Pupils are developing confidence in their own skills and are acquiring a good perception of how artists use colour and shape effectively. They concentrate well in lessons and work hard to produce work of good quality.

106. In the one lesson seen, teaching and learning were very good. This motivates pupils and makes them interested in their tasks. Teachers encourage pupils to use their sketchbooks to practise their ideas and skills. Art is used in many other subjects. For example, in science pupils use their observational skills to make accurate drawings. In religious education pupils draw and sketch artefacts or buildings and illustrate their written work well. Information and communication technology and the digital camera are used well for displays in art and design.

107. The co-ordinator ensures that all aspects of the subject are covered during the year and that pupils have the opportunity to learn skills in the use of clay as well as a wide range of other materials. Pupils join together very effectively for workshops and specific events, such as the designing and making of the mosaic and the banner of hands for the Millennium. Pupils visit museums and work enthusiastically with visiting artists. Pupils' work is displayed attractively around the school and this helps pupils to feel that their work is valued. Art and

design make a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, attainment in design and technology is in line with national expectations. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make at least satisfactory progress as they move through the school.

109. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 have a clear understanding of the design and making process. They are encouraged to plan and design each item thoughtfully and draw their plans for using a winding mechanism carefully. Some use Hickory, Dickory, Dock as a basis for a mechanism that will move the mouse up the clock successfully. Other pupils make Incy Wincy Spider move up and down the drainpipe. By using another technique learned in Year 1, pupils make the hands move on the clock face or add a circle that can be turned to show when the weather is fine and when the rain comes. Pupils evaluate their designs when the project is completed and pupils have very few changes they wish to make because they feel, quite rightly, that they have worked hard and produced a good end product. Pupils plan 'Golden Jubilee' sandwiches in their food technology lessons. They work hard, researching which breads are most popular, which fillings are preferred and who would eat each type of sandwich. They construct tally charts and print off a range of graphs on the computer. When they make their sandwiches pupils practise their cutting, slicing, grating and spreading skills. Pupils appreciate each other's contribution to the task and are very keen to offer their answers when the teacher asks, "What job was the most difficult?" and "Which job did you like most?" Pupils are keen to taste the results of their work and prepare their evaluation.

110. There is a good awareness of the need to build on skills in Years 4, 5 and 6 and pupils use their knowledge of different types of sliding and pop-up techniques used in books very successfully. They plan their work very carefully, first selecting the genre for their story before deciding what to include. As a result of much hard work and imaginative ideas, pupils produce high quality books with a very good range of different moving parts. Pupils work well with different materials and methods of joining them with precision. They plan to make 'Celebration' biscuits in food technology and produce a fascinating array of biscuit designs, much influenced by the imminence of the World Cup. They list their ingredients and examine the range of biscuits available very carefully, finding many to their liking, but some are given a poor report.

111. In the one lesson seen teaching and learning were good. Appropriate attention was paid to health and safety, and hygiene. Effective planning and preparation enabled pupils to have everything to hand. Pupils learn skills because the teachers plan well and are very well prepared for lessons. There is always an emphasis on learning skills, broadening knowledge about the topic and understanding the processes used. Parent helpers give invaluable support in these lessons and this enables pupils to learn skills more quickly because they do not have to depend on only the teacher for help. Pupils enjoy the subject and the inclusive atmosphere of the school was reflected well in the food technology lesson when they worked sensibly and happily together.

112. There are good guidelines for teaching the subject and very good links with literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and art. Work produced through design and technology is an important element of the variety of displays around the school. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

113. No lessons were observable for either geography or history during the inspection. However, discussions and review of pupils' work, together with photographic evidence, confirm that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in each subject as they move through the school. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, attainment in geography and history matches that expected nationally for pupils of their age. This is a similar picture to that reported at the time of the last inspection. Review of teachers' planning confirms that, to cater for the needs of pupils of different ages within each class, the school has successfully devised a programme of studies that prevents pupils from repeating topics, and meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum.

114. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a clear idea of their immediate locality. They draw simple maps of their routes to school, including features of the nearby area. As part of their work, pupils investigate the ways in which they travel to school and discover the most and least frequent forms of transport. Pupils have a good understanding of seasonal changes in the weather and the effect this has on life in general. They know the countries that make up the United Kingdom, together with a range of background information relating to each. Pupils compare and contrast their life near Taunton with that on the fictitious 'Island of Struay'. They identify similarities and differences, together with perceived benefits and drawbacks of living on the island. They consider what each lifestyle has to offer, which they prefer, and give reasons for their preferences.

115. At the end of Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of world climatic zones, and note the impact each has on the life in the region. As part of their work on 'Water', pupils study the water cycle, together with the journey of a river from its source to the sea. Work links well with science and ICT when pupils investigate the rate that puddles of rainwater evaporate in the sun, together with the rate at which different soils soak up water. Findings are supported by computer generated graphs. Pupils undertake detailed studies of lifestyles in other parts of the world, and, as such, these contribute to their cultural understanding and development.

116. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of chronology and change. Their learning is supported by activities that compare and contrast toys from years ago with those of today, and finding out how their homes and contents differ from those of days gone by. History comes alive when, as part of 'Victorian Week', pupils dress in the costume of the day and experience what it was like to be a Victorian school child. Pupils learn of famous people and events, including Florence Nightingale and the work she undertook in the Crimean War. They consider how hospitals and the care of the sick have changed since then.

117. From Years 3 to 6, pupils learn in detail about their own heritage, together with those living in Ancient Egypt. By the time they leave school, pupils have a clear understanding of Tudor times, together with the life and character of Henry VIII and why he married six times. By the end of their studies on Roman Britain, pupils have a sound awareness of not only how and why the Romans invaded Britain, but of the subsequent impact and benefit their way of life had on the existing culture. A review of work shows pupils to have an appropriate understanding of life during World War II, particularly the lives of children. Their understanding of day-to-day events was enhanced when, on a visit to Cold Harbour Mill, pupils were unexpectedly informed by an authentically dressed air-raid warden that a German bomb had landed nearby, and led them to an air-raid shelter. As evacuees, pupils write letters home to their parents. Such activities not only support understanding of life in those times, but help develop pupils' writing skills. Pupils make effective use of ICT to support learning. In addition to word processing accounts, they research CD-ROM encyclopaedic programs together with approved Internet sites to gain information. Visits, such as that to Taunton Museum, together with handling a range of artefacts, gives pupils a clear understanding of the differences between primary and secondary sources of evidence in interpreting historical events.

118. Pupils' positive attitudes towards geography and history are reflected in well presented work that often takes the form of individual topic booklets carefully made by each pupil. Work

is thoughtfully marked with comments that not only evaluate the content of work, but acknowledge effort. Both subjects are soundly managed and are supported by appropriate visits to enhance learning. Planning for each unit of study in either subject is underpinned by appropriate documentation that complies with recent National Curriculum guidance.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. Limited direct teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) was observable during the inspection. However, observation of pupils at work, review of teachers' planning and records, together with scrutiny of work, confirm the subject has maintained its position since the last inspection. By the end of Years 2 and 6, attainment meets national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Thorough planning ensures all requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Since the last inspection, the school has improved significantly its provision for the subject and staff have recently completed nationally funded training for ICT.

120. Across the school, pupils experience keyboard and mouse operated systems. Pupils operate tape recorders to listen to pre-recorded stories and music, and to record items themselves. By the end of Year 2, pupils understand the importance of switches, buttons and keys in operating functions of basic household items. Older pupils appreciate the importance of computer technology, and our increasing reliance on it for many aspects of everyday life.

121. Computers are in operation for much of the day providing pupils with good opportunities to develop their skills in ICT. Pupils in Year 1 use interactive programs, allowing them to enjoy stories, and use the 'click and drag' procedure to move and draw items on screen. By the end of Year 2, pupils write direct to screen, and use the shift key to obtain upper case letters, together with the space bar and backspace to edit. By the end of Year 6, pupils draft, edit, spell check, change size, style and colour of font, save and print their work. Pupils successfully manipulate and change size and position of items on screen. They produce texts that incorporate photographs imported from approved Internet sites, from digital cameras, or those scanned from conventional pictures. Across the curriculum, pupils use their text handling skills to good advantage as they research and illustrate work. In addition to using computers as word processors to write letters, poems and other literacy work, noteworthy examples of work include accounts of visits made to Cold Harbour Mill and Glastonbury Abbey by pupils in Years 2 and 3. Well illustrated 'Sporting Leaflets' together with a range of historical and scientific information demonstrate the skills and understanding of program procedures by pupils in Years 4 to 6. Although pupils have experience of sending e-mails with a file attachment, their experience in this area of the curriculum is too limited, and the school has identified this element as an aspect for further development.

122. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to investigate control technology. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 use programmable toys to enter directions for them to follow. Such activities reinforce understanding of direction, angles and distance, as well as developing skills associated with writing sequenced commands for the toy to follow. By Year 6, pupils operate logo style programs to devise and draw repeat commands and sequences and patterns. Pupils use control techniques when using a computer to control model cars they have constructed. A review of work confirms pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the use of sensors, as when they monitor and record heart rate before, during and after physical activity.

123. In addition to basic numeracy activities, pupils across the school make good use of computers for data handling and presentation. Pupils in Year 1 collect information from their friends concerning a range of matters and successfully produce pictograms which they then use to interpret results. As part of their work on the design and making of a 'Golden Jubilee Sandwich', pupils in Years 2 and 3 carry out surveys into favourite sandwich fillings and types of bread. Results of their findings are clearly represented by a range of graphs. Similarly,

pupils in Years 4 to 6 use computer generated graphs to show the results of their investigations into the nutritional content of a range of foods.

124. Pupils clearly enjoy ICT activities, and are eager to make use of their developing skills. They work very well, either by themselves or in pairs, treating resources with care, and are always willing to discuss sensibly the work of friends. Teaching in the few lessons observed was good. Teachers are secure in subject knowledge and give pupils clear and effective explanations. Praise is used well to encourage and motivate pupils. Class organisation and management are good. At all times, when pupils require assistance, adults' responses demonstrate confident expertise.

125. The subject is well managed. A thorough and useful policy, together with a scheme of work supports teachers' planning. However, although staff record skills pupils experience, they do not yet evaluate or assess in sufficient detail what individual pupils know and can do. The school has already acknowledged that in order to develop further pupils' attainment, it should:

- Implement a 'whole school' approach to assessing pupils' knowledge and skills in ICT;
- Develop further the use of electronic interchange of information.

MUSIC

126. At the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' overall attainment in music is in line with national expectations. However, the quality of their singing and confidence in performing are above expected levels. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their music making activities because of the very high quality of the teaching. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their prior attainment because of the interesting presentation of tasks and appreciation of their efforts.

127. In lessons and assemblies, pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn to sing a wide range of songs and hymns from countries around the world because they find the words and tunes interesting and challenging. They sing confidently to music played on tapes in assemblies, but are able to maintain their pitch and rhythm exceedingly well when singing unaccompanied. They switch from one mood or rhythm to another without difficulty and sing in French with assurance because they listen to the teacher well. Pupils find the warm-up exercises fun and concentrate so that they learn new songs quickly. They clap their claves in time with the music and repeat patterns correctly.

128. Pupils in Year 3 improve the quality of their singing because they follow the teacher's instructions carefully. They learn about phrases in music and think carefully about the pitch of notes in a short phrase they are learning. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 know the importance of posture when singing and they show that they understand correct terms in music. One pupil sings a solo line in a staccato (disjointed) way and another sings the same line in a legato (smooth) style. The rest of the group follow with an echo and all produce very good quality sound. Pupils' diction is very clear and pupils develop a good sense of pitch because of the consistently high quality of the teaching of singing. Pupils listen and copy the teacher's singing in an exemplary manner. They read the score for a song with confidence, and sing the two parts immediately, improving their performance as they become more familiar with the melody and words. Pupils improvise on glockenspiels whilst others sing and they find this blending of voices and instruments fun.

129. The quality of teaching by the part time specialist music teacher is of very high quality. His expertise enables the pupils to reach high standards in their singing and develops an enthusiasm for music and performing well. Lessons are exciting, demanding, motivating and fun; enabling pupils to build on skills effectively and securely.

130. Pupils of all ages enjoy the fast moving music lessons because time flies by and they are carried along by the enthusiasm and skill of the teacher. Levels of concentration are very good because there are frequent changes of activities and pupils want to sing and play instruments. They know that there are exercises to practise if you want to sing well and they participate in these with energy and eagerness.

131. Music is seen as an important feature of the school. The co-ordinator, who has a considerable interest and enthusiasm for music, provides good support for other colleagues. This enables all staff to follow up the visiting teacher's lessons so that pupils cover every aspect of the music curriculum over the year. A small group of pupils benefit from skilled teaching by visiting instrumental teachers, and practise together in an ensemble each week. They learn the additional skills of playing together and listening to the sounds and notes played by other instruments. Pupils learn to play the recorder and show an interest in making music in a variety of situations. Pupils perform in concerts, and music plays a significant part in Christmas productions, when several pupils sing solos or duets. Pupils join with other schools in a singing afternoon and have regular workshops with visiting artists. Music makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132. Evidence from lessons observed, together with discussions with teachers confirm physical education has maintained its position since the last inspection in that pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. At the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' performance is consistent with national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs play a full part in all activities and make sound progress. All pupils understand the importance of warming up at the start of lessons and cooling down at the end. They recognise the need for exercise to maintain healthy bodies. A review of planning confirms the planned curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

133. Although the school has no hall, regular and effective use is made of the village hall opposite the school. In a movement lesson, pupils in Year 1 showed satisfactory awareness of space and of those around them as they moved with control of speed and direction around the hall. They run, hop and skip with agility and enthusiasm. Pupils listen well and respond quickly to instructions. They held a range of balanced positions well before successfully incorporating them in their travels around the hall. Pupils worked well with partners to plan and perform sequences of travel and held balances.

134. In outdoor activities, pupils in Years 2 and 3 were observed developing running techniques. They responded well to good teaching regarding running on the ball of the foot, the position of the head, knees and arms. The learnt skills were developed well in a series of routines that culminated in the introduction of relay batons which pupils were shown how to receive and pass on in the correct manner. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 worked with enthusiasm to improve their sprint start in running, and their control of direction when throwing. Good coaching by the teacher regarding the body and arm position, together with the correct point of release, resulted in an improvement of pupils' performance. This was improved further when pupils realised that distance thrown could be increased by 'walking into' the throw.

135. The school makes very good provision for swimming. From reception onwards, all children have weekly swimming sessions at a pool in Taunton. Very few pupils leave school at the end of Year 6 without having achieved the required 25 metres. The majority has gained awards for personal survival, and pupils have a good awareness of water safety. Appropriate provision is made for pupils' outdoor adventurous activities. A variety of field trips, together with residential visits to outdoor activity centres, provide for orienteering, abseiling and a variety of team building activities.

136. Pupils have very positive attitudes to physical education. They enjoy physical activities and co-operate well in groups and pairs. They listen carefully to instructions, concentrate well, respond quickly, and work sensibly. Pupils take pride in demonstrating to the rest of the class, and appreciate the effort of others. They evaluate sensibly the performance of others, stating aspects they feel to be successful, and where improvements can be made. Pupils' enthusiasm for sport is shown in their early arrival each morning to participate in self organised games of hockey. During playtimes, lunch and after school, pupils enjoy games of cricket. At all times they use appropriate playground equipment and, whilst adults are always close by, pupils have a good awareness of safety issues. During such activities, boys and girls show sound techniques of throwing, catching and striking.

137. Of the three lessons observed, teaching was judged to be good in two; the third was satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and show a clear development of skills and activities. A common strength is the importance placed on drawing attention to good or praiseworthy attempts. In all lessons observed, teachers had high expectations. They gave effective demonstrations and clear explanations, and, where appropriate, adults worked directly with pupils to support learning. Appropriate emphasis was placed on safety issues, especially when crossing the road to the hall with youngest pupils.

138. The subject is well managed. Appropriate documentation supports teachers' planning for the development of pupils' skills across each element of the curriculum. Whilst the school does not have a field of its own, it uses the village field for a range of sporting activities. The school actively promotes sport. Pupils take part in a range of seasonal games and tournaments, and benefit from working with coaches in a number of sports. The subject contributes well to pupils' social and moral development through them working in groups and teams, and by complying with the various rules and requirements of the games and activities in which they participate.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

139. By the ages of seven and eleven standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed guidelines for religious education. A strength of the subject is that pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of Christianity and other religions because they listen well to the very good reading of stories. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well because of the good teaching of the subject. Standards are similar to those at the last inspection.

140. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 know that Jesus is an important person in Christianity. They know that Jesus told stories to encourage people to help and care for each other and they recall the important events in Jesus' life. Pupils know about important people in the life of the modern church: for example William Booth. Pupils learn about the journey made by Saul and are clear that God spoke to him and changed him. They recall details from the video about his conversion very accurately in their written work. Pupils make their own journey to Glastonbury Abbey and realise that they would not be able to live as monks, although they find the Abbey beautiful and spiritual. "I couldn't get up at two o'clock in the morning!" wrote one pupil. Pupils know the important words to describe festivals and artefacts associated with Judaism and understand the significance of some of the symbols and days that are special to the Jews. Pupils in Year 1 illustrate their stories of Jesus' life very well and understand that some stories from the Bible are about God and some about Jesus. They understand how important friends are and that Jesus' friends were the disciples.

141. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 clearly understand that there are good reasons for rules. They have an understanding of moral dilemmas, which they link well with some of the Commandments. They have clear ideas about responsibilities and know that they will have to take on more of these as they grow older. When asked, "Who is your neighbour?" in an assembly, a pupil's immediate response was, "Everyone!" Pupils are aware that being a

good neighbour involves responsibility for their own actions and for others. Pupils consider thoughtfully the part played by Martin Luther King in the fight for racial equality, and design posters to support a wide range of charities. They think hard about good causes they could support. Pupils search for information about Judaism on the Internet and in books. They gather together this information and their writing shows good understanding of Jewish celebrations and artefacts.

142. Teaching and learning are good because of the balanced approach to learning from the teachings of religions as well as learning facts and information about religion. Visits to places of religious significance bring religious education to life and improve the quality of pupils' learning. There is a good emphasis on faiths other than Christianity, which ensures that pupils are able to learn about and understand the customs and beliefs of other faith groups. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to discuss and express their own views and contribute well in assemblies.

143. The subject is led and managed well by the co-ordinator. There are good links with other subjects for example, literacy, information and communication technology and art. Assemblies, with regular visits from local ministers, contribute well to the religious education curriculum and pupils show a good level of respect when prayers or grace are said. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.