

INSPECTION REPORT

VALLIS FIRST SCHOOL

Frome

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 108971

Headteacher: Mrs S Cornford

Reporting inspector: Mr D J Curtis
20893

Dates of inspection: 10th-13th February 2003

Inspection number: 246840

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Milk Street Frome Somerset
Postcode:	BA11 3DB
Telephone number:	01373 462657
Fax number:	01373 453013
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Hill
Date of previous inspection:	February 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr D J Curtis 20893	Registered inspector	English Design and technology Information and communication technology	How high are standards? (The school's results and achievements) How well are pupils taught?
Mrs H Barter 9052	Lay inspector		How high are standards? (Attitudes, behaviour, personal development, relationships and attendance) How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
Mr J Palethorpe 20671	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Modern foreign languages Physical education Inclusion	How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs J Bavin 16038	Team inspector	Science History Religious education Special educational needs	
Miss H Carruthers 22167	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

TWA Inspections Ltd
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
Glos
GL53 7JX

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Vallis First School is situated in Frome in Somerset. It is an average-sized primary school, with a total of 250 pupils on roll, 109 boys and 141 girls. A small number of pupils come from ethnic minority families. There are six pupils who have English as an additional language, although none is at the early stage of language acquisition; as a proportion this is below the national average. There are 65 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, with 14 pupils having a Statement of Special Educational Need; as a proportion this is above average. Eleven pupils presently attend the Language Resource Base attached to the school. Currently, there are 55 pupils entitled to free school meals; as a proportion this is above average. Children enter school with standards that are well below average for the local education authority. The number of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than of normal admission/transfer is high.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a rapidly improving school, with many strong features. Pupils make good progress in their learning to achieve standards in mathematics, science and information and communication technology that meet expectations for their age. Pupils' attitudes to school, and their behaviour and relationships, are good. Teaching is good and contributes significantly to the good progress pupils make in their learning. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good and make a significant contribution to the school's rapid improvement. Learning support assistants make an effective and a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The way in which all pupils, irrespective of gender or ability, are included in the school is an outstanding strength. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Pupils' attitudes to school, and their behaviour and relationships, are good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Language Resource Base, is good.
- The quality of teaching is good and contributes significantly to the good progress made.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good and impact positively on the school's improving standards.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and geography by the end of Year 4.
- The provision for more-able pupils.
- The consistency of teachers' marking and expectations of how pupils should present their work.
- Pupils' attendance and punctuality.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS PREVIOUS INSPECTION

The school was last inspected by HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectors) in February 2001, when it was taken out of special measures. The school has made good improvement since then. Standards in mathematics, science and information and communication technology now meet expectations for nine-year-olds, and standards in English, although below expectations, are improving. Subject co-ordinators are now much more effective. The school is well placed to meet its targets and secure further improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2, based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
Reading	D	E	D	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	D	E	D	C	
Mathematics	E	E	D	C	

Similar schools are those more than 20 per cent and up to 35 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals.

By the end of Year 4, when pupils transfer to middle school, standards in English are below expectations for nine-year-olds. In mathematics and science, standards meet expectations. Taking into consideration that in 2001 the results of the National Curriculum assessments were well below average in all three subjects, pupils have made good progress in Years 3 and 4. However, for more-able pupils, progress has been only satisfactory and these pupils are underachieving in English and mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology meet expectations for nine-year-olds. Pupils benefit from good teaching and lessons taught in the 'ICT-Suite', including literacy and numeracy. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In art and design, design and technology, history, music and physical education, standards meet expectations for nine-year-olds. In geography, standards are below expectations because pupils are not taught the key skills and knowledge required.

Current inspection findings judge that, by the end of Year 2, standards in speaking, listening and reading are below average, with those in writing average. Although most pupils reach the expected standard, more-able pupils are underachieving and not reaching the higher standards of which they are capable. In mathematics and science, standards are average, although more-able pupils are capable of higher standards. Standards in information and communication technology meet national expectations and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In art and design, design and technology, history, music and physical education, standards meet expectations for seven-year-olds. In geography, standards are below expectations because pupils are not taught key skills and knowledge to sufficient depth.

By the end of the Foundation Stage, children make good progress and meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception.

Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements of special educational need, make good progress in their learning. They receive effective support from their teachers and the dedicated efforts of learning support assistants.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils show very positive attitudes to school and lessons. They clearly enjoy school and are prepared to work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons, at breaks and lunchtimes, and when moving around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults are good. Older pupils support younger pupils especially well and this is recognised and valued by parents.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory and has a negative impact on pupils' learning. A number of pupils are frequently late, which disrupts the start to the day.

This is a fully inclusive school, with strengths in relationships between pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is a strength of the school and makes a very effective contribution to pupils' progress and improving standards.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good; it makes a significant contribution to the good progress children make in their learning. The teacher and learning support assistants plan a wide range of activities, which are challenging and successfully meet the different learning needs of children in these classes.

Strengths of teaching in Years 1 to 4 include the sharing of learning objectives with pupils at the start of lessons, and good explanations and demonstrations. Relationships are good between pupils and teachers. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Effective use is made of the 'ICT-Suite' to teach pupils key skills and to apply them, especially in literacy and numeracy. However, expectations are inconsistent in relation to pupils' use and application of handwriting and spelling skills. Marking is inconsistent and does not always tell pupils how well they have done or what they need to do to improve.

The teaching of literacy is satisfactory, with strengths in the teaching of the key skills of reading and writing, although pupils are not consistently given sufficient opportunities to use and apply these skills. The teaching of numeracy is good. Teachers implement the National Numeracy Strategy most effectively. The teaching of key skills in number is particularly strong.

Teaching of information and communication technology is good, with strengths in whole-class teaching in the 'ICT-Suite', including literacy and numeracy lessons. Teachers plan successfully for the subject to support pupils' learning in most other subjects. Pupils are given good opportunities to use and apply their skills in information and communication technology when working in other subjects.

The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and learning support assistants are aware of the targets in individual education plans and ensure that pupils' work is matched to them.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. In Years 1 to 4, pupils receive their full entitlement to the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school has rightly concentrated on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. Provision of extra-curricular activities and for personal, social and health education is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Individual education plans are good, with clear, realistic and challenging targets. The deputy headteacher, the co-ordinator for special educational needs and learning support assistants provide high quality support.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good and makes a positive contribution to pupils' positive attitudes and good relationships and behaviour. Provision for pupils' personal development is supported effectively in personal, health, social and citizenship lessons (PHSCE).
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. Pupils are well cared for in the school. Child protection procedures are fully in place and health and safety issues are monitored rigorously. Procedures for and the use of assessment are good.

Parents who attended the meeting and who returned questionnaires were very supportive of the work of the school in relation to the standards achieved and their children being happy at school. The school has

effective procedures for assessing pupils' learning and using the results of information gathered to plan future work. However, day-to-day marking of pupils' work is inconsistent.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and has had a significant impact on school improvement, which has been rapid. There is a shared commitment to succeed and to continue to raise standards; for example, the school recognises the need to improve standards in writing.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. All statutory responsibilities are fulfilled. Governors are hard working and supportive, and have a very clear understanding of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and her colleagues have a thorough and detailed understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Funding for special educational needs is used efficiently. Additional grants are used effectively to support pupils' learning.

The accommodation is good, with the new drama room and 'ICT-Suite' making a significant contribution to pupils' progress. Staffing levels and resources are good and effectively support pupils' learning. The significant strength of leadership and management is the positive impact on school improvement, which is recognised and valued by parents. The school applies most successfully the principles of best value in its spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching is good. The school is well led and managed. The school has very high expectations of their children. Their children make good progress at school. The school helps their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No areas identified.

Twelve parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector and 133 questionnaires were returned. Inspection findings support the positive views of parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. There are a number of factors which impact on the standards achieved by pupils in the school; these are:
 - children start school with standards which are well below average for the local education authority;
 - twenty-two pupils currently have additional support for speech and language development in addition to those in the Learning Resource Base;
 - the number of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than of normal admission/transfer is high – 40 per cent of the pupils currently in Year 4 are in this category;
 - attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory;
 - in the last two years, six teachers have left the school and six have joined;
 - on the index of social deprivation, the school is in the lowest 10 per cent of social need in the county.

Foundation Stage

2. Children start school with standards that are well below average, especially in speaking and listening. As a result of good teaching, children make good progress in the reception classes. By the time they start Year 1, the majority are on course to meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals¹ in all areas of learning.

Years 1 and 2

3. The results of the 2002 National Curriculum assessments for pupils in Year 2 were below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion achieving the expected Level 2 and above was above average in reading, average in writing, but below average in mathematics. The proportion achieving the higher Level 3 and above was well below average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. These proportions depress the school's overall results. However, the results show a significant improvement on those achieved in 2001. In mathematics, girls achieved higher standards than boys. In comparison with those in similar schools² nationally, results were average in reading, writing and mathematics. However, at Level 2 and above, the proportion was well above average in reading, above average in writing and average in mathematics. The proportion achieving the higher Level 3 and above was average in writing, but well below average in reading and mathematics.
4. In the 2002 teacher assessments for science, the results were above average for the proportion achieving the expected Level 2 and above, but well below average for the proportion achieving the higher Level 3 and above. These results show a similar pattern to those in similar schools nationally.
5. Current inspection findings judge that, by the end of Year 2, standards in speaking, listening and reading are below average, with those in writing average. Although most pupils reach the expected standard, more-able pupils are underachieving and not reaching the higher standards of which they are capable. In reading, this is because they are

¹ 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 Schools with more than 20 per cent and up to 35 per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals.

spending too much time on a commercial scheme rather than a wider range of fiction. More-able pupils have insufficient opportunities to use and apply key skills when writing in English and other subjects. In mathematics and science, standards are average, although more-able pupils are capable of higher standards. Work is not sufficiently matched to meet their learning needs.

6. By the end of Year 2, standards in information and communication technology meet national expectations and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils benefit from good teaching and lessons taught in the 'ICT-Suite', including literacy and numeracy. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In art and design, design and technology, history, music and physical education, standards meet expectations for seven-year-olds. In geography, standards are below expectations.

Years 3 and 4

7. By the end of Year 4 when pupils transfer to middle school, standards in English are below expectations for nine-year-olds. In mathematics and science, standards meet expectations. Taking into consideration that in 2001 the results of the National Curriculum assessments were well below average in all three subjects, pupils have made good progress in Years 3 and 4. However, for more-able pupils progress has been satisfactory and these pupils are underachieving in English and mathematics. In English it is because too many pupils are still on the school's commercial reading scheme and expectations of how they use and apply key reading and writing skills are too low. As a result, the school has not fully addressed the key issue from the previous report to raise standards in English, although some progress has been made. However, it has been successful in raising standards in mathematics and science.
8. By the end of Year 4, standards in information and communication technology meet expectations for nine-year-olds. Pupils benefit from good teaching and lessons taught in the 'ICT-Suite', including literacy and numeracy. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In art and design, design and technology, history, music and physical education, standards meet expectations for nine-year-olds. In geography, standards are below expectations because pupils are not taught the key skills and knowledge to a sufficient depth.
9. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning and achieve well as measured against the targets in their individual education plans. They benefit from good teaching and the very effective support given by learning support assistants. Planning in lessons is of high quality and there is clear evidence that pupils benefit from being taught in ability groups (sets) for literacy and numeracy.
10. The school has made good progress in raising standards since the previous inspection, with the result that most pupils are achieving expected standards. It recognises the need to further improve standards in English and this is addressed in the school improvement plan. The school has been successful in meeting its targets. Inspection evidence is consistent with the school having the quality of teaching, leadership and management that will allow it to meet its future targets and continue to raise standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils continue to have good attitudes to school and to their learning, and the majority respond well to the school's expectations for good behaviour. As a result of good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils make good progress in their personal development. Parents are pleased with the standard of

behaviour in the school and nearly all say that their children are growing in maturity and responsibility.

12. While pupils' attitudes to school are good, their attendance levels are below the national average and this has an impact on their levels of attainment. Unauthorised absences arise because parents do not let the school know the reasons for their children's absence. The school monitors punctuality closely because this is an on-going problem and statistics show that this is slowly improving as a result. However, a few pupils from a small number of families are regularly absent or late arriving at school and this affects the overall figures.
13. Pupils enjoy learning and respond to interesting and stimulating activities. They are enthusiastic, listen attentively and respond to questions and tasks with good concentration and involvement. They make good use of 'talking partners' to discuss their ideas and engage well in opportunities for paired work. Some pupils, particularly boys, lack maturity and are over-excitabile in lessons. They do not always concentrate as well as they might and sometimes switch off from the activities provided. The youngest children in the reception classes are developing good attitudes to learning. They behave well and have good relationships with each other and with adults.
14. Most pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They know what is expected of them, follow the school rules and move around the building sensibly. They are friendly and welcoming, and many use signing to say 'Hello' to adults and visitors, which creates a positive atmosphere in the school. Pupils eat their lunches sensibly in the classroom and relate well to lunchtime staff. The youngest pupils behave well during outdoor play and mix well together. Older pupils' play is mostly lively and happy, although some boys are over-boisterous when using the fixed play equipment or playing football. Pupils say that there is a little bullying, but that it is usually 'sorted out'. Some pupils in the school have significant behavioural and emotional difficulties, and require additional support to behave appropriately and to prevent them from disrupting others' work. One pupil was permanently excluded last term following a series of violent and aggressive episodes.
15. Pupils are making good progress in their personal development. They respond to the school's expectations for work and behaviour, and are learning to understand how to get on with others. Pupils have satisfactory relationships with one another, accept each other's differences and work well alongside pupils from the Learning Resource Base and those who have other difficulties. When participating in drama, for example, they discuss their work and co-operate sensibly with one another. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility, for example as Year 4 monitors when they encourage others to move sensibly from the hall to the classroom after assembly. Those pupils who are school councillors are learning to take initiative when they discuss how the school could be improved and suggest making posters to ask parents to donate clothes for 'dressing up' activities. Pupils say that they enjoy the wide range of activities on offer, that they make good friends at school and that their teachers are friendly. One Year 4 girl said that the best thing about the school was that she 'went home knowing at least three new things every day'.
16. There is a significant minority of pupils with special educational needs. Their difficulties include social, behavioural, speech and communication difficulties, in addition to those supported by the Learning Resource Base. The whole-school approaches to managing behaviour positively often prevent potential problems. Because of the good support that these pupils receive they share the same positive attitudes to school as their peers.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The previous inspection report judged the quality of teaching to be good in half of the lessons observed, with 'almost all the remaining lessons sound'. In a 'few lessons', teaching was judged to be 'less successful' where the pace was 'slow' and there were 'some inaccuracies in the information relayed to pupils'.
18. Current inspection findings judge that the quality of teaching is good and that it makes a positive contribution to the good progress made by the majority of pupils in their learning. In addition, it makes a strong contribution to pupils' positive attitudes, good behaviour and relationships. Inspection findings support the views of 99 per cent of parents, who agree or strongly agree that teaching is good.
19. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good. The effective teaching provides children with a broad range of learning activities, which are well structured but fun. Within the two classes, children gain in confidence quickly and make good progress in their learning. Clear boundaries are set and children know what is expected of them in terms of behaviour. The teamwork evident between the teachers and the learning support assistants is strong. There is good lesson planning and on-going assessment is used effectively to track children's progress and to plan their future work.
20. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory, with strengths in the teaching of key reading and writing skills. The teaching of phonics (letter sounds) is a strong feature of literacy lessons and contributes to the good progress pupils make in learning key skills. In addition, they are taught successfully the key skills of writing, including punctuation and grammar. However, there are weaknesses in the teaching of more advanced reading skills, especially deduction and inference, with the result that more-able pupils underachieve in reading. Pupils have too few opportunities to apply key skills in writing for different purposes and audiences. Teachers are inconsistent in reinforcing expectations that pupils should use key punctuation, grammar and spelling skills in their writing, particularly through the marking of work.
21. The teaching of numeracy is good and contributes significantly to the good progress pupils make and improving standards. Lesson objectives are shared with pupils at the start of lessons so that they know what is expected of them. There is good use of learning support assistants, especially in the lower 'sets', and this enables all pupils to be fully included in lessons and to make good progress. There is very effective use of 'talking partners', pupils who discuss problems and solutions with a partner. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace and group work is well organised and challenges pupils of all ability levels.
22. The teaching of information and communication technology is good and contributes to the significant progress made in raising standards since the previous inspection. Teachers show good subject knowledge and make very effective use of the 'ICT-Suite' to teach key skills. They show particularly good use of the interactive whiteboard when explaining and demonstrating new learning. In lessons, teachers make very good use of learning support assistants to support pupils and this contributes to the good progress made. Teachers make very good use of the 'ICT-Suite' to teach literacy and numeracy lessons and this makes an effective contribution to the application of computer skills to literacy and numeracy.
23. The quality of teaching received by pupils with special educational needs is good overall. Pupils benefit from:
 - teachers planning well to use their learning support assistants fully, for example to work with a small group of pupils;
 - the strong relationships that they have with learning support assistants, which keep them motivated, participating and learning;

- all adults throughout the school sharing a commitment to the inclusion of all pupils in all aspects of the lesson;
- a shared approach to managing behaviour and social development positively;
- teachers who are well informed about their individual needs because they make very good use of outside specialists.

However, there are lessons when, although teaching is satisfactory, planning to meet individual needs throughout the lesson is unsatisfactory. In these lessons, pupils may be quiet but behaving inappropriately, so while they are not preventing their peers from learning, opportunities to reinforce their personal development are missed.

24. In the best lessons, teachers share the learning objectives with pupils and this involves them immediately in their own learning. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 4 the objective was 'to write a poem based on the style and structure of others'. Because pupils knew the objective, most were successful in drafting a poem with a rhyming pattern. Lessons often begin in an exciting and stimulating way, which immediately catches the attention of pupils. For example, in a science lesson in Year 1 a teacher came into the classroom 'drenched' and carrying an umbrella made out of paper. This motivated the pupils to look at materials that would be waterproof and enabled them to make good progress in their understanding of the properties of materials.
25. Where teaching is successful, the middle part of lessons where pupils work in groups, pairs or individually is managed successfully. It is stronger in those lessons where teachers have learning support assistants and is particularly the case in the lower numeracy and literacy sets. Planning is good and is clearly focused on the different learning needs of pupils. As a result, they make good progress in lessons. However, teachers do not plan successfully for the needs of more-able pupils, with the result that they make insufficient progress. Teachers do not make sufficiently clear to pupils how much work they should do nor whether there is an extension activity. There is a lack of challenge for these pupils.
26. Where teaching is good, the final part of the lesson is used to link the lesson objective to pupils' learning and to provide a good opportunity to assess the progress they have made. For example, at the end of a literacy lesson on poetry when pupils read their work to the class, the teacher asked, "Which lines impressed you most? Did the second and fourth lines rhyme?" In addition, the comment to one pupil, "As good as your poem is, you have used the word 'nose' too many times", gave the pupil both praise and ideas about how the poem could be improved in a redraft.
27. A strength of teaching is the very effective way teachers manage pupils and set high expectations of behaviour. There is an additional strength in the encouragement of paired discussion, which contributes to pupils' social development and to their speaking and listening skills. For example, in a religious education lesson in Year 3 the teacher asked pupils to come up with their own definitions for the word 'symbol' which they could give to pupils in Year 2. There was a very good link to literacy because the teacher reminded pupils that the word 'definition' had been a focus of literacy lessons.
28. The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. Where it is successful, particularly in pupils' monthly assessment books, it is of good quality and gives pupils a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve. However, day-to-day marking in exercise books is not of the same high quality and pupils do not always know how well they have done or what they need to improve. Teachers do not reinforce expectations that skills taught in literacy, especially spelling, are applied when pupils write in other subjects. Day-to-day assessment of reading is unsatisfactory, with the result that more-able pupils are reading books that are too easy for them; this contributes to their underachievement in reading.

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

29. There have been good improvements to the curriculum. Detailed lesson planning is provided and subject co-ordinators, working under the strong leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, monitor the effectiveness of lessons and adapt planning when necessary to improve the quality of teaching. Teachers are planning well for the single-age classes and lessons are inclusive for all pupils, including those from the Learning Resource Base.
30. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are planned carefully. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is good and that of the literacy hour is satisfactory. In literacy and numeracy, lessons are planned for the teaching of groups of pupils by ability and this targeted work is raising standards, although they are still not high enough, particularly in literacy. In literacy, improvements are required to increase opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening, reading and writing skills further.
31. The quality and range of learning opportunities provided are good across the school. There is a strong framework provided for the curriculum, with built-in progression. There are clear learning objectives, which are set out for lessons. Whole-school planning for subjects is thorough and supplemented by schemes provided by the local education authority and by commercially produced schemes where appropriate. There is inconsistent provision for more-able pupils, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Overall, time is used effectively. However, there is less emphasis on geography. All subjects have detailed policies and there is an on-going plan to review and update them.
32. The curriculum for pupils from Year 1 to Year 4 covers the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education, which is taught according to the locally agreed syllabus. For these pupils, the curriculum is satisfactory in terms of breadth, balance and relevance, with planned improvements to be made in literacy and geography and for more-able pupils in English, mathematics and science. Key targets in the school improvement plan are to continue to raise standards in English, mathematics and science for all pupils, particularly those identified as being more able, and to improve standards in geography. There are sound links between literacy and numeracy and the other subjects of the curriculum. Information and communication technology is well promoted by the use of a computer suite as well as computers provided in classrooms. Suitable homework is provided, which is satisfactorily linked to literacy and numeracy work as well as topic projects.
33. The curriculum provided for the Foundation Stage children being taught in the two reception classes is good in terms of breadth, balance and relevance. Lesson planning ensures that children receive a full entitlement to the curriculum for this age group. There is a strong focus on developing their use and understanding of social and personal skills, which results in good behaviour and relationships throughout and enables much learning to take place. Literacy and numeracy skills are well promoted, with children being confident with the early stages of reading and in mathematics, counting well. Children are provided with a structured reading scheme and have access to a range of books. A particularly good feature is the emphasis given to children's physical development, both indoors and outdoors. Overall, children have good experience of the required areas of learning, so that there is a seamless transition to the National Curriculum.
34. Provision for pupils identified with special educational needs is good, with carefully planned support provided. Pupils, including those from the Learning Resource Base, are included fully in the life of the school, and their individual needs are well met. The school

complies fully with the Code of Practice³ for special educational needs and its provision is supported by a suitable policy. There is equality of access for all pupils across the curriculum. The school is identifying gifted and talented pupils and developing ways to provide enrichment activities for them.

35. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good and involves pupils of all ages. The school runs a wide range of clubs and activities, such as sporting (including football and athletics), country dancing, art, information and communication technology, choir, and French. Extra activities are provided for literacy, numeracy and homework. Pupils take part in sporting events with other schools, such as a local swimming gala. A peripatetic teacher visits the school weekly to take violin tuition. Whole-school projects linked to work in art and history take place. Pupils in Year 4 take part in a residential trip. Pupils sing in the community and the school has links to local churches. Numerous visitors join in school activities to enrich learning, including artists, musicians and African dancers.
36. The school follows the local education authority's guidance for personal, social and health education. It is at present developing its own policy and programme to enrich this further. Provision is good, with drugs and alcohol awareness, citizenship and sex education suitably included, and being developed further. The programme is taught through class lessons and discussions, such as lessons known as 'Circle Time'⁴ sessions, with links to science and other subjects as appropriate. Visitors are invited to take part when relevant. Elected pupils take part in a school council, which meets regularly with the headteacher and teachers, and this enables them to contribute to the running of the school and to take on extra responsibilities.
37. The community makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning. They take part in the Frome Festival, and local companies are helping to improve outdoor facilities. Local shops get involved with topics, and teachers and pupils visit them to provide first-hand learning experiences. Visits to a nearby quarry take place. The school has good links to other schools and pre-school providers. There are effective induction arrangements for the children coming into the reception classes and for the transfer of pupils in Year 4 to local middle schools.
38. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development, which is reflected in their good attitudes to school, their behaviour in lessons and their developing maturity.
39. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well through the school's emphasis on positive praise, which raises their self-esteem, and the inclusive way in which they are all encouraged to achieve well. Pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on how they can improve their behaviour and attitudes to others in assemblies. They participate joyously in singing and signing songs and respond respectfully during prayers. Pupils' interest and enthusiasm for learning add much to their development. In a literacy lesson, Year 1 pupils watched with anticipation and felt a real sense of achievement as they successfully named the items hidden in the troll's pot. Teachers plan some good opportunities for pupils to experience delight. This was particularly evident when Year 2 pupils opened their eyes to discover a range of fascinating 'debris' washed up during a storm. They sighed with pleasure when they saw 'Tiresome Ted', who had been tossed out to sea in the story to which they had been listening.
40. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is also good. They learn how to get on with others, to share ideas and to agree because teachers provide them with many

³ Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that 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 2001 Education Act.

⁴ During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of issues. They agree that nobody will interrupt and only one person at a time will speak. They will respect other pupils' views. Pupils therefore feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from other children.

opportunities for paired working, for discussions as 'talking partners', and turn-taking activities, such as games in group work. The school recognises that many pupils have relatively low-level social skills and provides them with opportunities to develop their relationships with others through clear guidelines for behaviour and support for those who have more significant difficulties; for example, a circle of friends is set up for pupils who experience problems in the playground. Pupils' views are valued by staff and their suggestions discussed in the school council are taken seriously. Participation in activities such as the school choir and visits outside school, including a residential visit, also teach pupils how to get along with others in different settings.

41. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. They learn about their own culture through visits to art galleries, work in a media arts project with the local community college and participation in an annual country dancing festival. They explore the values and beliefs of other faiths in religious education and discover other cultures in art and music; for example, children in the reception class showed great pleasure in dressing up in Chinese clothes and listening to music when taking part in a festival celebration. Pupils have very little experience of the world outside their mainly white community. When opportunities arise, the school introduces pupils to the cultures of other people in the world, for example when a black French dance group visited the school recently.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. This is a caring and inclusive school where all pupils receive good educational and personal support and guidance, which helps them to achieve well and to make improvements in their behaviour and personal development. Nearly all parents say that they can approach the school if they have concerns. They feel that the school promotes good standards of behaviour and that any problems with bullying are dealt with well because the school involves all children in resolving the difficulties.
43. There are very good systems in place for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of pupils, although insufficient attention is given to this area in some physical education lessons. Improvements have been made to the school premises, such as the restriction of traffic movement between the main building and the playground. The school is aware of the difficult nature of the building and insists that pupils move carefully around it. Staff understand pupils' backgrounds very well and are caring and sensitive to their needs. Accidents and concerns are carefully recorded and staff care well for pupils with individual medical needs. There is very good understanding of child protection procedures. The detailed policy and guidelines are followed correctly and there is very good liaison with outside agencies who support individual pupils. The school is fortunate to have a family liaison worker who provides a vital link between social services and other care agencies and a regular drop-in and support service for families who are experiencing difficulties.
44. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in reaching the targets on their individual education plans. The school makes very good provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs. In spite of good procedures for checking what pupils know, understand and can do in most subjects, and beginning to identify those pupils who have strengths in particular subjects, the school does not provide sufficiently for gifted and talented pupils. This is because of the lack of opportunity for the most capable pupils to demonstrate their abilities consistently in core literacy and numeracy skills.
45. Although the school maintains sound procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance and has worked hard to improve and reward punctuality, attendance rates have remained below the national average for the past three years. The school emphasises the importance of regular attendance to parents in its documentation, follows up unexplained absences and uses the services of the family liaison worker to support families in crisis. In spite of this, some parents continue to condone their children's absence or regularly bring

them late to school in the morning. The school monitors this closely and involves the educational welfare service where necessary.

46. The school has established good systems for monitoring and promoting pupils' behaviour and, as a result, it is good throughout the school. Classroom and school rules are clearly displayed on walls and there are good and imaginative systems for reminding and rewarding pupils when they have behaved and achieved well. This raises their self-esteem and supports their personal development well. Pupils say that they particularly enjoy the system of 'golden time' at the end of the week, which rewards consistently good behaviour. Pupils say that there is some bullying, but that teachers do 'sort it out'. The school continues to monitor its systems for effectiveness and involves pupils, parents and staff well when discussing where potential problems lie.
47. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. The assessment of children entering the school is thorough and involves parents effectively in their children's learning as they begin school. Data from national and voluntary tests is carefully analysed and is used to track pupils' progress as they move through the school, identify gaps in their learning and plan work to meet their needs. Testing information is used effectively to set pupils from Year 1 in literacy and numeracy and to identify pupils with special educational needs or who may benefit from additional support, such as Springboard mathematics or the additional literacy strategy. Lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are very well supported by learning support assistants and, as a result, they make good progress and achieve well. However, teachers' day-to-day assessment of pupils' reading is a weakness in the school and is reflected in the standards achieved. Reading records indicate only which book of the school's reading scheme the pupil is on and do not give sufficient indication of their ability and where any difficulties lie. Records completed during weekly guided reading sessions also do not adequately fulfil this function.
48. The school has devised a useful system of consistent assessment and recording opportunities for all other subjects, and the information gained from this is used well in written reports to parents. Portfolios of work against which teachers may agree National Curriculum levels are developing, although not all are as well annotated as they might be. Much work has been done on collecting and evaluating data in order to set individual pupil targets in writing, reading and numeracy. The school has identified that it now needs to develop its target setting procedures so that pupils are more involved in this process and are clear about what they need to do next to improve. Group targets are displayed on classroom walls, although teachers do not often refer to these in lessons in order to focus pupils on improving their work and to engage them more fully.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The school is developing good links with parents and is working well with them to include more of them in its activities and to engage them more actively in their children's learning.
50. In the questionnaires, parents are particularly positive about:
 - the way in which the school is led and managed;
 - the quality of teaching and high expectations which enable their children to make good progress;
 - the way in which their children are helped to behave well and to grow up;
 - the fact that they can approach the school with any concerns.
51. In letters and at the meeting parents praised the improvement that the school has made in the last three years. They particularly appreciate the hard work of the headteacher and staff and recognise the impact that this has had on their children's behaviour and learning. They appreciate that the school has responded to their request for more information about

what their children will be learning, although a small minority said that they would appreciate even more. This was particularly because a few parents are not sure what the expected levels of achievement are and would like to know how well their children are achieving against those levels.

52. The school provides parents with good quality information. The 'Thursday Note' is a valuable method of communication with parents and is much appreciated by them. Termly curriculum information is detailed, gives good tips to parents on how to help their children at home and encourages them to bring in resources to support work in the classroom. There are good quality reports on pupils' progress, which are discussed with parents in the spring term in order to give them advice about how they may support their children's academic progress. The school's documentation is detailed and encourages parental support and participation in activities and their children's work at school and home.
53. The school recognises that not all parents are as involved in its work and in supporting their children as they might be. Very good work is done by the family liaison worker to support families who are experiencing difficulties and to persuade parents of the importance of regular attendance at school for their children. There are good opportunities for parents to meet staff at termly consultation meetings and at regular class assemblies. The 'ICT Club' is well attended by parents, who work alongside their children. The school encourages parents to attend workshops, such as for mathematics, although not all of them take full advantage of these opportunities.
54. The school is well supported by its parent governors, who attend parent meetings to hear their views. It is keen to canvass the views of parents through questionnaires and encourages parental contact through newsletters and telephone calls. In spite of this, very few parents regularly offer their help in school and there is little evidence of many parents hearing their children read at home or supporting homework activities. Most parents give good support to the Vallis School Association's fundraising activities and most attend consultation and review meetings with teachers and special educational needs staff.
55. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs contribute to the annual reviews and comment upon their children's positive progress. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs participate in reviews of individual education plans.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The last report described Vallis First School as a rapidly improving school, and that remains the case today. Much of this is due to the fact that the leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are very good. The headteacher shows clear educational direction. In a very short time she has built a team, with new and existing members of staff, capable of taking the school forward. She leads by example and is a very effective manager. She ensures that teachers with responsibility are enabled to make their contribution to the school's development, and many are doing this very effectively. Naturally, most progress on this front has been made with the core subjects⁵, but others are following in their wake. All concerned with the school take a great pride in its work, which is based on a foundation of good relationships and teamwork. All adults, both teaching and support staff, including dinner supervisory assistants and the 'lollipop lady', are aware of their roles and are an essential part of the team.
57. As with most other aspects of the school, the governing body is developing well and at a good pace, and is a great asset to the school. A good number of its members are new to this body and all are keen to do their best for the school. Many have taken advantage of the local education authority's training scheme for governors and are well aware of their

⁵ English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and religious education

roles and responsibilities. It has been a steep learning curve for most, but all are positive about the way forward. There is a sound committee structure; all committees have appropriate terms of reference. Individual governors have good links with classes and subject co-ordinators. They meet each other at intervals, enabling the governors to have first-hand experience of what is happening in the school, and to understand its strengths and weaknesses. Governors work with co-ordinators in forming the action plan for each subject and these feed into the whole-school improvement plan. The key issues from the last report concerned raising standards and improving leadership in core subjects. The school development plan addresses these points thoroughly, and a number of initiatives are in place to work towards the necessary outcomes. Governors monitor progress regularly at their meetings, where co-ordinators report on progress in their subject. Governors are prepared to listen and to question, acting as critical friends.

58. There is a regular programme for the headteacher and senior management team to monitor teaching. This links well with the performance management system and teachers' needs are identified, with the necessary action taken. Help may be given in school, or courses may be attended. The performance management system is wide-ranging and very effective. It includes all who work at the school, including learning support assistants and the school crossing patrol lady. This has been well thought out, as, for instance, the school crossing patrol is the first point of contact for many parents, so promotion of the school is possible. There is a regular review of performance of all concerned. Monitoring of standards and analysis of results are the foundation for the school's improvement. The paperwork and documentation for this are exemplary, showing a breakdown for each subject and for boys and girls. Good use is made of the information gained to address pupils' weaknesses, for example through the 'Mathematics is Fun Club'. This is already having a positive impact on standards.
59. The deputy headteacher has led and managed the provision for special educational needs very successfully. As well as ensuring that the school adheres to the requirements of the new Code of Practice, she has developed good systems for analysing and tracking the progress of pupils with special educational needs. This means that the school is in a good position to identify its many strengths and analyse those areas for further development in pupils' learning. While the deputy headteacher has retained responsibility for overseeing how well pupils of different groups are included in school life, there is a new co-ordinator for special educational needs, with whom she is working closely. Together they form a team with the teacher in charge of the Learning Resource Base and class teachers. This teamwork benefits the pupils considerably. For example, it means that adults in the school understand their needs well and provide a flexible response to meeting their needs.
60. All educational priorities are supported through careful financial planning. The school improvement plan itemises every aspect, indicating how much it will cost, where the money is coming from, and how the benefits of the spending will be evaluated. Careful thought is given to all spending decisions. For example, the new drama room has been created to help pupils develop their speaking and listening skills, an aspect the school had identified for improvement. The benefits of this will be monitored regularly. The school has a much larger than average carry forward of money from one year to the next. The reasons for this are well documented, well founded and convincing, and the carry forward has been greatly reduced this year. Principles of best value are strictly adhered to. Three quotations are considered for all major spending, with the one giving best value taken. The school consults with staff, parents, governors and pupils in order to be clear about what the community wants. The finance administrator maintains effective and efficient control of the school's finances. The headteacher and the chair of finance committee are regularly updated with regard to the financial situation. Every year each budget heading is scrutinised to see how it was spent and what value it was to the school. All specific grants are spent appropriately. The criterion used in all cases is, 'How will it benefit the pupils?'

Administrators are making good use of new technology for e-mail, attendance registers, assessment data and finance.

61. The school places great importance on maintaining staffing levels to have two classes in each year and budgets accordingly. This means that staffing levels are good. In addition, there are a good number of skilled learning support assistants who support pupils' learning, especially those with special educational needs. The school has good accommodation, with specialist areas such as the newly created drama room. It is a stimulating and well maintained environment for the pupils to learn and play in. Outside, there is adequate hard playing space, although the field is a short walk away. A good deal of money has gone into improving learning resources. These are now good, especially in the core subjects, and are having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning and their standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education for its pupils the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) raise standards in English and geography by the end of Year 4:
 - through ensuring that pupils are reading books that are matched to their ability levels, improving the monitoring and assessment of their progress in the school's commercial scheme, ensuring that they are given more opportunities to write at length, and that teachers consistently expect pupils to use and apply key skills when they are writing in English and other subjects; in addition, by providing more stimulating 'Book Corners' and improving the library to stimulate a love of reading;
 - through ensuring that pupils are taught the necessary geographical skills, knowledge and understanding required by the National Curriculum; (paragraphs 5-8, 10, 20, 30, 32, 37, 80-85, 88-89, 114 and 116)
 - (2) improve the provision for more-able pupils by ensuring that in lessons they are suitably challenged and know exactly what is expected of them in relation to work to be done; (paragraphs 5, 7, 20, 25, 31, 80, 90, 94 and 116)
 - (3) improve the consistency of teachers' marking and the way in which pupils present their work through more rigorous monitoring of the school's marking policy; (paragraphs 28, 94 and 112)
 - (4) work with parents, pupils and the appropriate agencies to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality (paragraphs 12 and 45).

In addition the governing body may wish to include the following in its action plan:

- ensure that sufficient attention is paid to health and safety issues in physical education, such as pupils wearing correct clothing, not wearing jewellery, tying back long hair, and chairs and other equipment not protruding into the working space (paragraph 141).

PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIFIC LANGUAGE IMPAIRMENT

63. Provision for pupils with specific language impairment is very good. Strengths in the provision include:
- flexible arrangements to meet individual pupils' needs very effectively;
 - staff in the Learning Resource Base have very good relationships with pupils, so pupils are ready to learn and co-operate even when work is challenging;
 - the teacher in charge of the Learning Resource Base works closely with class teachers so that pupils receive the same curriculum as their peers;
 - the quality of teaching in the Learning Resource Base is very good and helps pupils to make very good progress within lessons and achieve well.
64. The school makes special provision for up to 12 pupils with specific language impairments. During the inspection the Learning Resource Base identified 11 pupils throughout the school with statements of special educational need because of specific language impairment. However, their language and communication difficulties range from moderate to severe, and some pupils have additional learning difficulties. The whole school includes these pupils very well. For example, each pupil supported by the Language Resource Base starts the day at registration in a mainstream class alongside their peers. After registration the amount of time that each pupil spends in class and in small group work in the Language Resource Base is determined by their individual needs. One pupil has a dual placement with a local special school. Parents appreciate these individual arrangements that suit their children so well.
65. The staff team includes a teacher-in-charge, a full-time learning support assistant and five part-time learning support assistants. Two speech and language therapists support the school. Pupils benefit from the close working partnership between these therapists and the school staff. Staff in the school and in the Learning Resource Base share a strong commitment to helping pupils achieve really well while enjoying the full National Curriculum, so they provide a finely tuned and thoughtfully organised balance of specialist small group work and access to the same curriculum as their peers. For example, pupils leave small group work to see the speech and language therapist because this is less disruptive to their learning than leaving a whole-class lesson.
66. Teaching is very good. Learning support staff are very well briefed and pupils clearly trust them. This means that pupils are prepared to try, even when they are uncertain. This was apparent during the inspection when one child concentrated very well to sort out various farm animals and count them meaningfully. During the inspection three small group teaching sessions were observed; one was good, one was very good and one was excellent. Strengths in teaching lie in:
- managing pupils very well with high expectations of effort and behaviour;
 - adapting questions and tasks to meet individual pupil needs, for example providing the opportunity for a more able pupil to define a jungle as 'a hot forest', while a pupil with greater difficulties describes *what* she sees, 'a lion';
 - using attractive resources, such as animal puppets, that capture pupils' imaginations, hold their interest and fire them with enthusiasm to write;
 - all adults using several means of communication, such as clear speech, facial expression, signs and symbols to support effective communication and provide pupils with a means of responding;
 - very good teamwork between teachers and support staff.
67. Strengths in teaching compensate for the cramped base room when three adults may be working at the same time. Often two support assistants work with a pupil each, while the teacher works with a small group, who also have a member of the support staff with them. It is a testimony to the adults' skills that in this situation pupils concentrate extremely well on their task and sessions proceed at a good pace, with all pupils learning very effectively.

68. Staff take considerable care, as does the rest of the school, to record what pupils achieve. Consequently, teachers have detailed information to draw on when reporting to parents and other professionals. Reports for annual reviews are thorough, evaluative and, importantly, they celebrate progress. They give a clear picture of achievements and the next priorities for learning. Targets in individual education plans reflect the needs identified in pupils' statements of educational need, so they often include social skills as well as academic development. Members of staff constantly review their teaching to ensure that they are meeting emerging needs and developing pupils further. For example, a pupil may join the resource base with no spoken language and learn to communicate through a system of exchanging pictures and symbols. However, once a habit of communication has been established, the expectations to develop communication, for example to incorporate signs and sounds, are increased.
69. Structured teaching such as this is highly dependent upon inspiring pupils to want to communicate. This is why the quality of trusting and nurturing relationships is such an important feature of the resource base work. All adults are unfailingly courteous and patient with pupils. They set an excellent example to pupils of how to treat people and how to speak to them. One example of many is the teacher asking, 'Would you all like to join in?'
70. In summary, the Learning Resource Base is very successful in meeting its stated aims to:
- build pupils' self-esteem and confidence in order that they work with increasing independence and interact socially;
 - provide a balanced education taking account of specialised needs and pupils' entitlement to a full curriculum;
 - enable pupils to be supported by specialist input;
 - provide pupils with strategies to learn alongside their peers;
 - provide a happy, calm environment in which to nurture 'our pupils' potential'.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	5	30	20	0	0	0
Percentage	1	9	54	36	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 one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	250
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	55

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	14
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	65

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	19	22	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	17	16	16
	Girls	20	20	21
	Total	37	36	37
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	90 (75)	88 (77)	90 (77)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	17	15	19
	Girls	21	21	21
	Total	38	36	40
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	93 (77)	88 (75)	98 (73)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	241	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	3	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	3	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	300

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.4

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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	628,033
Total expenditure	603,842
Expenditure per pupil	2,473
Balance brought forward from previous year	93,800
Balance carried forward to next year	118,361

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 53%

Number of questionnaires sent out	250
Number of questionnaires returned	133

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	31	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	35	1	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	46	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	44	5	2	0
The teaching is good.	71	28	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	42	9	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	28	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	30	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	39	5	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	84	15	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	33	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	47	6	1	7

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

71. There were 48 children attending full-time in the two reception classes, the Foundation Stage, at the time of the inspection. Most children have taken part in some form of pre-school experience before joining one of the reception classes. Children attend school part-time for a few weeks to start with and then full-time. The attainment of the majority of children on entry to the reception class is well below that expected for children of this age. Due to the effective teaching and the strong lesson planning used, children, including those with special educational needs, make rapid gains in their achievements, which results in good progress across the six areas of learning. By the end of the Foundation Stage and by the time they start in Year 1 the majority of children have attained the expectations for their age in the Early Learning Goals for these areas of learning.
72. Since the last inspection the positive picture of provision reported on then has been maintained and extended further, and is now good. The Early Years curriculum and policy have been developed to reflect the recently introduced Foundation Stage. The two teachers plan well across the six areas of learning, emphasising the development of literacy and numeracy skills. They are forming a strong reception unit and the children are benefiting from the two classes now situated next to each other. Teaching is good, enables children to gain in confidence and prepares them well for work in the National Curriculum in Year 1. Good procedures for assessment and its use give teachers and learning support assistants valuable information to assist in their planning of activities for children. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress and are encouraged to be involved with assessment activities from the start. A strong focus is placed on developing children's social and personal skills and the result is that they are happy and secure, behave well, and learn rapidly, making good progress on overcoming identified weaknesses in social, language and numeracy skills at entry. Children with special educational needs benefit from early identification and are well supported in their classes. The liaison between the reception classes and pre-school providers is good and they work together well to give the children the best start possible.

Personal, social and emotional development

73. The majority of children attain the expected levels of personal, social and emotional development by the time they start in Year 1. This is good achievement for the children, many of whom start school with weaknesses in this area. They are enthusiastic about their activities and work well on their own, in pairs or small groups. They know the routines and what is expected of them, behave well and make good progress. They get on happily with their work when they are not working directly with the teacher or learning support assistant, for example when engaged in structured play activities in the 'Chinese Restaurant'. Children change quickly for physical education and move about the school to the hall in an orderly manner. They concentrate well in all lessons and sensibly sit in a circle or on chairs for class discussions. Teachers and learning support assistants have high expectations of children's behaviour and the children respond well. Throughout, good opportunities are provided for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are many opportunities to share and celebrate special moments and the wonder of life. Children take part in assemblies with the whole school and in their class. They listen to stories from the Bible and start to find out about celebrations from other faiths. They join in singing hymns and listen to the school choir performing. Children mix well socially at playtimes and can explain that they helped plant the tubs of bulbs placed around their playground. The teaching is good, being consistent between the two classes, and children have good attitudes to learning and to others.

Communication, language and literacy

74. The majority of children make good progress in developing their literacy skills. In speaking, listening, reading and writing most children attain the expected level by the time they start in Year 1. Children listen well and are confident when talking to visitors. They

are friendly and want to ask questions, such as, 'What is your name?' They are keen to involve visitors in their structured play activities and delighted in acting as waiters and waitresses to take orders for meals in the 'Chinese Restaurant' or bringing a plate of food to their visitor. Children are developing good attitudes to reading and are making good progress on the structured reading scheme. They have access to the school library and book trolleys in the classrooms. Reading is well organised with strong home and school links, but there is a lack of a wider range of reading books which are graded for ability. This would provide a richer range of books and encourage a greater interest in and love of books and push children's learning and progress further forward, particularly for those capable of higher attainment. Parents are encouraged to be involved in hearing their children read and sharing reading books with them at home.

75. Children enjoy listening to stories, such as that of 'Mrs Wishy Washy', and could predict what happened next and recall the story. They enjoy playing word games and are beginning to know a range of letter sounds. Most children write their names, many copy or write some words and some have progressed to simple sentences. Children draw pictures about the stories that they have listened to, and talk about them with confidence. The formation of handwriting varies considerably, but children try very hard to form letters correctly. Teaching is good with many opportunities for children to develop literacy skills in other aspects of the areas of learning, such as mathematics, music and drama. Children have good attitudes to their work, are enthusiastic and make good progress in learning.

Mathematical development

76. Children make good progress in developing their numeracy skills and the majority attain the expected level by the time they start in Year 1. Children can match numbers and delighted in doing this when 'parking' their bikes in the 'parking bays' at the end of playtime. They can count to 10, and some can count to 20 and beyond. Many count on and back from a given number under 10 or 20. Children enjoy challenges, such as taking 2 from 24 to find the answer 22 when helping the teacher complete the attendance register in the morning. Children progress to simple addition, with higher-attaining children finding different ways of making 10. They are learning to write numbers and to record their answers. Children can form simple charts to record the results of 'tests', such as 'Who takes the most or least bites to eat a small piece of carrot?' They carry out simple weighing out and measurement activities. Children are given good opportunities to measure different objects inside the classroom and outside. They know the difference between the size and weight of different objects. There are good links to literacy and across all areas of learning, such as when singing action songs and cooking. Children have good attitudes to learning in numeracy and benefit from the good teaching and many practical and well-organised activities provided.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

77. The majority of children are making good progress in the development of their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are attaining what is expected by the time they start in Year 1. Children are confident in their use of computers, both in the classroom and in the computer suite. They know the basic keys on the computer keyboard and use the mouse to click on the correct icons to carry out simple functions and to play games, such as when matching letter sounds. They show much excitement and awe when, with adult help, they print off their finished work, such as black and white patterns drawn in a Chinese writing style. Some children drag and then drop an item across the computer screen. Children begin to learn about the past and other cultures. They love to find out and investigate, and were full of awe when looking at the style of Chinese clothes and enjoyed dressing up in some of them. They know the names of vegetables and, with their teachers and learning support assistants, learn to cook simple things. With adult help they made a stir-fry dish with vegetables. They visit the local supermarket to buy vegetables. Children are given opportunities to use construction materials and can build moving toys with wheels. They model and shape materials, such as playdough-type mixtures.

Children are excited about this area of learning and enjoy finding out about different things. They have good attitudes to learning. The overall quality of teaching and the range of activities provided are good.

Physical development

78. The majority of children make good progress in their physical development and attain what is expected by the time they start in Year 1. Children are given good opportunities, both indoors and outdoors, to develop their physical skills. Indoors, they use the school hall for physical education and the drama room for expressive movement. Children are happy and confident at moving around different spaces, both indoors and outdoors. They use the space in and around the playground well at break times, pushing prams and large toys, and riding on wheeled toys and three-wheeled bikes. In a physical education lesson seen in the hall, children moved in various directions at different speeds and in a variety of ways with great enjoyment. They responded well to instructions and performed their finished sequences to each other, taking much delight in doing so. Children enjoy moving in various ways to music, then listening to it and being still. They take great delight in performing a dragon dance, complete with a large model dragon and streamers for them to wave. Children benefit from the enthusiasm of teachers and learning support assistants, joining in activities with much gusto. They respond to this well with good attitudes to learning. The quality of teaching is consistently good.

Creative development

79. Children are provided with a broad range of creative activities and the majority make good progress and attain what is expected by the time they start in Year 1. Children draw, paint and make models such as hats and dragons as part of their topic work. They cut materials with scissors and use glue to stick the shapes on their designs. They mix different colours using paint, and use clay to make models. Evidence shows work linked to the senses, such as the 'Splish, Splosh, Splash' collage work. There are plans to lower the sink and fixed work surface area in one classroom to match the work already completed in the other, so that these are a better height for the children. Children enjoy singing different songs and join in with the actions enthusiastically. They recall different songs and follow a simple beat well by clapping their hands. They name various instruments and perform in a band to accompany taped music with great enjoyment and confidence. Children respond well to different types of music played on tape and this provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are given good opportunities for imaginative role-play and use a range of games and toys imaginatively. However, in the creative play areas some of the equipment is used a lot and in need of replacement. Teaching is good and activities are well thought out to extend learning further. Children behave well, are highly motivated and have good attitudes to learning.

ENGLISH

80. By the end of Year 2, standards in speaking, listening and reading are below average; standards in writing are average. Taking into consideration the standards when children start school, pupils of average and below average ability make good progress and achieve well. However, more-able pupils do not achieve the standards of which they are capable because expectations are not high enough. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as the result of very effective teaching and good support from learning support assistants.
81. By the end of Year 4, standards in English are below expectations for nine-year-olds. However, taking into consideration that, at the end of Year 2, standards for this year group were well below average, pupils have made good progress. The progress of more-able pupils is only satisfactory and they do not achieve the standards of which they are capable because they are not sufficiently challenged in reading and writing.
82. Standards in speaking and listening are below average. The school recognises this as a major area for improvement and the introduction of a drama room, with regular timetabled lessons, is having a positive impact in giving pupils more opportunities, particularly in speaking. Pupils mainly listen attentively to teachers during lesson introductions, although this is not always the case, especially when boys are furthest away from the teacher. Pupils are keen to answer questions, although they often offer a quiet, one-word answer; pupils do not project their voices sufficiently well. However, the strong emphasis on paired discussions is making a positive contribution to developing pupils' confidence.
83. Standards in reading are below average. Whilst pupils successfully master the basic key skills of reading, these skills are not extended, with the result that, by the end of Year 4, few pupils read with good expression. Pupils lack the higher reading skills of inference and deduction. By the end of Year 2, they are successful in using phonics (letter sounds) and picture cues to help them read new and unfamiliar words. However, they show no great enthusiasm for reading and show no preferences for a favourite book or author. They have a satisfactory understanding of 'author', 'illustrator' and 'publisher'. Pupils are unsure of the difference between 'fiction' and 'non-fiction'. By Year 4, they still show no great enthusiasm for reading and do not talk enthusiastically about favourite books and authors. Key skills have not progressed beyond those achieved in Year 2. The school places too great an emphasis on a commercial scheme of work, with the result that more-able pupils in Year 4 are at the same 'level' as those in Year 2. In discussion with pupils, particularly the more able, it was evident that they are bored with reading through the scheme book by book, especially when some are reading 'Harry Potter' at home. Across the school there is inconsistency in the quality of 'book corners', and the school is not doing enough to promote a 'love of reading'.
84. Pupils do not use local libraries on a regular basis and many are unclear when asked to explain the terms 'contents', 'index' and 'glossary' in relation to reference books. More-able pupils can explain how to find a specific piece of information within a reference book. The school library has a satisfactory stock of books and during the inspection there was an 'Author of the Month' display featuring Michael Morpurgo. However, none of the classroom or school displays reinforced this message or promoted his stories. The walls of the library are drab and the colour scheme is uninspiring, with the result that it is not attractive or exciting and does not promote a love of reading.
85. Standards in writing are average at the end of Year 2, but below expectations for nine-year-olds at the end of Year 4. By the end of Year 2, standards in spelling, grammar and punctuation are satisfactory. However, whilst pupils are taught these key skills, they have insufficient opportunities to use and apply them when writing for different purposes and audiences. Teachers do not consistently reinforce expectations that the spelling of key

words matters. For example, in Year 4, prayers written on the theme of Christmas as part of a religious education lesson contained 'cristmas' and 'chrismas'. There are strengths in pupils' writing, which are evident in their 'Writing Assessment Books', including stories, poems and instructions. However, this quality is not reflected consistently in their day-to-day work. When given the opportunity, pupils can produce imaginative work; for example, in Year 3 a pupil wrote, 'What is a breeze? The breath of an angel. When do butterflies sleep? When flowers sing to them'. Currently, standards in Year 3 meet expectations for eight-year-olds, with examples of more-able pupils achieving good standards. Across the school, standards of presentation and handwriting are inconsistent, because teachers are inconsistent in reinforcing expectations that pupils should present their work neatly and produce a consistent joined-up style of handwriting.

86. Pupils make satisfactory use of literacy skills when working in other subjects. In Year 3, in history, pupils carry out research into Viking weapons and then write fact sheets about them. In Year 4, pupils research life in Ancient Egypt to help them write key facts on the theme 'Life after Death'. In science, pupils write the results of experiments, for example on insulation, and in religious education they research and write factual accounts of Hindu beliefs.
87. Teaching is satisfactory, with a balance of strengths and weaknesses. The strengths are:
- the teaching of key skills, including phonics (letter sounds);
 - the daily 'phonics warm-up' at the start of each literacy lesson;
 - the use of learning support assistants in lessons to make assessment notes in lesson introductions and then to support pupils in group work;
 - providing pupils with literacy targets;
 - the use of the drama room to support speaking and listening;
 - the development of paired discussion activities.
88. The weaknesses are:
- the overuse of a commercial reading scheme and lack of monitoring of pupils' progress through it;
 - insufficient assessment of pupils' progress in reading on the scheme;
 - marking which does not reinforce expectations that pupils should use and apply previously taught key skills;
 - marking which does not consistently tell pupils how well they have done and what they need to do to improve;
 - pupils not consistently reminded of their targets;
 - classrooms which do not consistently promote a love of reading and writing.
89. The subject is effectively led and managed by a dedicated and enthusiastic co-ordinator. She has achieved much in the raising of standards since the time the school was placed into special measures. Her major achievements are:
- devising and introducing a whole-school reading assessment linked to end-of-year targets;
 - introducing writing target sheets for all National Curriculum levels to be highlighted when pupils achieve them;
 - devising more activities to move pupils from Level 1 to Level 2c and from Level 2c to 2b in the Year 2 National Curriculum assessments;
 - setting up a 'Literacy is Fun Club' for pupils in Years 1 and 2.
- As a result, standards have risen significantly for the majority of pupils since that time. The co-ordinator recognises the need to raise standards further and her detailed action plan includes clear targets aimed at achieving this. Resources are satisfactory, although the quality and range of most classroom 'book corners' are unsatisfactory. The library, whilst stocked with a satisfactory range of books, is uninspiring as a stimulus to pupils' enjoyment of reading.

MATHEMATICS

90. Pupils' standards in mathematics are average at the end of Year 2. However, there are too few pupils at the higher end of the attainment range and their standards are not high enough. Standards at the end of Year 4 meet expectations for nine-year-olds, but too few pupils achieve at the higher levels. These are very similar judgements to those of the last inspection. Pupils enter the school with a very low level of attainment, which means that nearly all of them, including those with special educational needs, make good progress to reach their present level, and are achieving well.
91. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are confident with reading, writing and ordering numbers to 100, and many to beyond this. They have a sound understanding of place value, knowing that the 8 in 183 is 8 tens, and count forward and backward in ones and tens, starting from any given number. Most pupils round a number to the nearest 10 and have a basic understanding of simple sequences, such as counting in twos, or odd and even numbers. They use their number knowledge to help them with money problems. For example, they work out the cost of three items and find the correct coins to pay for them. Most measure fairly accurately to the nearest centimetre and draw lines to a given length, although care and neatness in such work are not always apparent. Most name and describe a variety of two-dimensional shapes, including 'circle', 'triangle', 'square', 'rectangle' and 'diamond'.
92. By the end of Year 4, pupils have developed their number work to include addition and subtraction with four-digit numbers. Most multiply and divide by 10 or 100 and explain their strategies when adding, subtracting, multiplying or dividing, choosing the right process for particular problems. Most understand inverse operations, such as ' $20 - 7 = 13$ ' and ' $13 + 7 = 20$ '. They understand the link between dividing and fractions, for example, by finding '1/5 of 20' by dividing by 5. They are competent with doubling and halving and use this knowledge as one of their strategies for other computations. For example, when adding 8 and 9 they know that '8 + 8 makes 16 (doubles), so 8 + 9 will be 17'. Most correctly use the symbols < and >. Pupils use their knowledge of number facts to solve a variety of 'real life' problems, although sometimes their reading and comprehension skills cause them to perform the wrong operation. Pupils collect data on a tally chart and display their results in bar graphs. They found out how much of different kinds of food was eaten by the pupils. Chocolate came top, with salad bottom! They change one metric unit to another, such as '5.47m to 547cm', and know that '1/4 kg is 250g'. Most have a sound understanding of the properties of a variety of two- and three-dimensional shapes, although some pupils' mathematical vocabulary is underdeveloped.
93. The teaching of mathematics is good throughout the school. The better aspects of teaching included:
- thorough planning with clear lesson objectives made known to pupils at the beginning of the lesson;
 - a brisk pace in the introduction which set the tone for the rest of the lesson;
 - a clear explanation and demonstration of the main tasks;
 - good use of learning support assistants, especially with less-able pupils, enabling all pupils to be fully included in the lesson;
 - group work well prepared and well organised, appropriately challenging all ability levels;
 - pupils well motivated and well managed;
 - effective open-ended questioning, which makes pupils think;
 - encouraging pupils to use a variety of strategies in working out problems;
 - good use of 'talking partners', pupils who discuss problems and solutions with a partner. This also make a contribution to pupils' social development;
 - good use of information and communication technology to support learning.

94. Where some or many of these aspects were evident, pupils worked hard and made good progress. On occasions there are some aspects that require improvement. They include:
- marking - to ensure that it is accurate and helps pupils to improve their work, including presentation;
 - ensuring that all pupils in the class are suitably challenged, especially the more able. Teachers are attempting to 'extend' these pupils, but not always successfully, as there is not sufficient understanding of what it is necessary for pupils to do to achieve the higher levels. There is a lack of detail in the planning for this to happen easily, as there are no references to National Curriculum levels.
95. The co-ordinator is working very conscientiously and effectively to raise levels of attainment. He has an action plan each year, with success criteria showing a desire to raise standards, and this is already having an impact. The factors leading to this improvement include:
- use of the local education authority to give demonstration lessons;
 - attendance at a five-day training course;
 - the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy;
 - observing all teachers in mathematics lessons with discussion afterwards;
 - involving pupils in observation of other classes;
 - purchase of new resources, which are now good in quality and quantity;
 - focus on particular pupils, giving them extra help to achieve the desired level;
 - careful monitoring and tracking of pupils' performance;
 - thorough analysis of test results to find out strengths and weaknesses;
 - holding meetings for parents on 'How to help your child with mathematics';
 - the use of individual mathematics targets, although in some year groups these do not have a high enough profile.
- The co-ordinator is already aware of the need to update the mathematics policy and develop the portfolio of work.
96. Pupils use their mathematics and numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, they produce various graphs from collected data in information and communication technology, and they make a variety of measurements in science, and design and technology. In history they order dates in a time line, and in geography they have constructed a graph to show how much litter each class throws away.

SCIENCE

97. By the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, most pupils reach average standards. This means that the school has maintained standards for pupils in Year 1 and 2 and improved standards for those in Years 3 and 4 since the last inspection. This is largely attributable to the improved quality of teaching in the subject, which is now good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning because:
- they are supported very effectively by learning support staff;
 - teachers include a lot of practical work, which means that pupils who are reluctant to speak or have difficulties writing demonstrate their scientific knowledge and understanding through active involvement in hands-on work.
- There is no discernible difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls in science.
98. Throughout the school most pupils use their writing skills successfully to plan and report on scientific investigations. However, those pupils who have the greatest difficulties in writing and speaking are limited in the extent to which they can explain their scientific knowledge and understanding. Fortunately, the school has a good understanding of how to meet the needs of these pupils and teachers provide plenty of opportunities for them to

demonstrate that their scientific skills exceed their literacy skills. Pupils have good opportunities to apply their mathematical skills through activities such as measuring arm length and recording results on a grid. There is a satisfactory use of information and communication technology, for example when pupils in Year 2 import images to enhance work on materials, their textures and their characteristics. There are useful links between science, physical education and personal, social and health education when pupils work on topics such as 'healthy eating' and 'medicines'.

99. When pupils join Year 1 they have a rudimentary vocabulary for parts of their body. They make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the human body and soon begin to distinguish between living and non-living things. By Year 2 they know that a seed needs sun, water and soil in order to grow and begin to compare healthy and unhealthy foods. They make similarly good progress in their understanding of how to plan an investigation. While predictions are tentative in Year 1, they are far more informed and confident in Year 2. This was apparent when younger pupils were uncertain about how to move a boat without touching it, whereas most pupils in Year 2, regardless of their literacy skills, had ideas, such as letting it float or blowing on it.
100. Pupils in Year 1 have a sound understanding of a variety of materials suited to different purposes. In a good lesson they reached a good level of knowledge and understanding of which materials are waterproof, through seeing one of their teachers soaking wet underneath a paper umbrella. Standards in work on physical processes are satisfactory. In a good lesson all pupils made an electrical circuit that worked and they demonstrated confidently how to break the circuit. However, they had difficulty explaining verbally how the circuit works.
101. Pupils in Year 3 investigate gravity and forces by exploring what bounces and things that change shape, with the level of knowledge and understanding expected for their age. They continue to develop their understanding of living processes as they explore healthy food in more detail. They scrutinise different soils and record their observations. Because pupils achieve well in science, by Year 4 they are exploring food chains and using their knowledge of creatures and their habitats to predict where woodlice will be found. They are confident practical scientists who are beginning to use existing knowledge, such as how heating and cooling affects materials, to make predications about insulation. However, they still find explaining verbally what they know and understand very difficult and they seldom spontaneously use the associated subject vocabulary, such as 'insulator' and 'conductor'.
102. Teaching is good and is particularly effective in enabling pupils with difficulties in expressing themselves to demonstrate their scientific knowledge and understanding. For example, adults write down what pupils say if necessary to ensure that their ideas are represented and recorded. While there are variations between classes, the strengths in teaching include:
- teachers' good expectations that pupils will achieve well in the subject;
 - good subject knowledge enabling teachers to ensure that pupils develop their own knowledge and understanding;
 - a suitably strong emphasis placed upon practical work;
 - examples of extremely good marking.
- When marking is highly effective it communicates interest in the individual pupils' work by commending their achievement and stimulating their thoughts further. For example, comments such as:
- 'Do the traffic lights move? Have a careful think when you next look at some'.
 - 'What would you use to make an accurate reading of the temperature of water?'
 - 'How can I tell that you are right-handed, S_____ ?'

Comments such as these communicate a high level of expectation of pupils and are highly successful in stimulating interest in the subject. This is evident in the impressive number of times that pupils provide a written response to the original comment.

103. The co-ordinator has successfully led the development of more consistent and effective assessment procedures, which are now good, to help guide teachers' planning. She has a good understanding of the strengths and development areas for the subject. She also has a very good understanding of how to enable pupils with literacy difficulties to achieve well in scientific knowledge and understanding. These strengths have enabled her to use the co-ordinator role to contribute to the gradually improving standards in the subject. The subject is supported by sufficient good resources, although science books are stored for adults to access rather than displayed in the library for pupils to use independently.

ART AND DESIGN

104. Evidence from work samples and lesson planning indicates that, by the end of Year 2 and Year 4, standards meet expectations for seven- and nine-year-olds. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. The previous inspection report did not focus on art and design so it is not possible to make any comparison of standards.
105. Recent improvements have expanded the role of the subject co-ordinator and there is now a detailed action plan for the ongoing development of art and design. The subject policy, display policy and lesson planning have been revised and updated. A useful portfolio of pupils' work is being collated to aid teachers in their assessment of individual pupils' progress in developing the skills associated with the subject. The subject is well co-ordinated and there are plans to start an art club with a focus to include gifted and talented pupils.
106. Examples of pupils' work indicate that a broad planned curriculum is provided. Younger pupils had used chalks effectively to make expressive portraits of themselves. There are examples of colour mixing and work on developing tones using paint, while the oldest pupils had made imaginative, shadow pictures based on the outlines of buildings. Older pupils use sketchbooks to draw with pencil and design in, and there are some examples of careful drawing using delicate outlines or different tones. However, the school is aware that these could be used more consistently. Evidence shows that throughout there are links to literacy and numeracy through drawings used to illustrate pupils' writing and pattern work in mathematics. There are examples of the use of information and communication technology for pattern making. Links made to other subjects include design and technology and history. Due to the organisation of the school's timetables and the timing of the inspection it was not possible to see any teaching and make a judgement on this or on pupils' attitudes to the subject.
107. Monitoring of lessons has taken place and pupils are encouraged to share their views. Resources appear at least satisfactory. Visiting artists and art workshops have enhanced pupils' learning in the subject and make a sound contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Training has taken place for other teachers to increase their knowledge of famous artists to aid pupils' appreciation of other styles of art. Display enhances work in art and there are some good links to other subjects, such as music.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, standards meet expectations, and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in their learning. No lessons were observed during the inspection because they are regularly timetabled for Thursday afternoons or Fridays. However, evidence was gathered from displays of pupils' work and a detailed portfolio of their previous work supplied by the co-ordinator.
109. Pupils satisfactorily apply their literacy skills when they label their designs and write evaluations of their finished products. However, teachers do not check that key spelling skills are applied when pupils write, especially important words that are related to the subject. For example, in a display showing work on textiles, the words 'sowe' and 'thred' were written by pupils and went uncorrected. There was little evidence to show that pupils use and apply skills in numeracy and information and communication technology when working in the subject.
110. By the end of Year 2, pupils show satisfactory skills in the process of designing, making and evaluating. Pupils use sewing skills successfully when they make 'coats' linked to the story of Joseph from the Old Testament. They are confident in answering the questions, 'What did I use?', 'What did I do?', 'What could I do to make it better?' In work linked to history, they design and make working drawbridges. They develop a good understanding of axles when they design and make their own wheeled vehicles.
111. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4. In Year 3 they design and make 'healthy' sandwiches, and this reinforces their understanding in their science work of the importance of healthy heating. In Year 4, they disassemble torches and show good skills in labelling the parts. Pupils successfully use and apply their knowledge of circuits when they design and make their own torches. Textiles skills are developed well when pupils design and make wallets and purses. They show a satisfactory understanding of levers and mechanisms when they make Victorian postcards with moving parts.
112. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about the quality of teaching. However, from the displays of pupils' work, it is clear that teachers are not consistent in reinforcing expectations of how well pupils should present their work, including spelling and handwriting.
113. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. There is an up-to-date policy to show how the subject is to be taught and a scheme of work to show the knowledge, skills and understanding to be taught. The co-ordinator is currently producing pupil self-assessment sheets to bring the subject in line with other subjects in the school. Resources are adequate and used effectively to support pupils' learning.

GEOGRAPHY

114. Standards at the end of Year 2 are below national expectations. For much of the school year, classes have geography alternating with history on the timetable. It was not possible to observe any lessons in Years 3 and 4, but from an analysis of their books and discussion with the pupils it is evident that their knowledge and understanding do not meet national expectations.
115. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a basic understanding of the environment around their school and of the environment on an imaginary Scottish island. However, their limited language skills and general knowledge make it difficult for them to discuss similarities and differences. Many draw symbols to represent different weather situations, such as rainy, cloudy or sunny. They have used their mathematics skills in drawing graphs of Barnaby

Bear's modes of transport on his travels, but have limited experience and knowledge of travel beyond their own locality.

116. By the end of Year 4, pupils have a basic understanding of environmental issues such as recycling and noise pollution. Looking at social issues such as this has contributed to their social development. They have looked at features in aerial photographs, but have only a limited understanding of why many of these features occur. Many are unsure about Frome's position on a map of the British Isles, and do not appreciate differences between Frome and other areas. For example, when asked to compare Frome with London, the only point raised was that 'They've both got loads of people'.
117. Teaching in geography is satisfactory. Planning is appropriate and lesson objectives are clear. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully included in the lessons. Good use is made of learning support assistants, sometimes on a one-to-one basis, to give help and support to those who need it. Teachers are thoroughly prepared, and pupils are well motivated and well managed. It is not always evident that all pupils are challenged sufficiently, particularly those of higher ability.
118. The co-ordinator for geography was only appointed in September. She has a number of strategies to implement, but has had little opportunity to influence standards. She has made a good start to developing systems for assessment and monitoring pupils' work. The school has focused heavily on the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology, and it is only proper that it should do so. However, this has meant that little attention has been given to some other subjects, geography being one of them. There is an appropriate action plan which indicates the need to improve pupils' map skills, to use the local community more to support learning in geography, and to increase teachers' awareness of what a child needs to do to obtain a Level 1, 2 or 3 in geography. A useful start has been made on a portfolio of work to aid this process.
119. There are sufficient resources to teach the curriculum, but they are not always used to their fullest extent. For example, atlases sit in a pile to be used for geography. They are not available for pupils to read or browse through at other times. This has a negative impact on their knowledge and understanding of map work.

HISTORY

120. During the inspection only two lessons were observed and both were in Year 4. Therefore, judgements are also based upon an analysis of pupils' work and discussions with teachers. Standards and achievement by the end of Year 2 and when pupils leave the school in Year 4 are satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs achieve reasonably well because of the effective support they receive in lessons, which keeps them concentrating and thinking. There is no judgement in the previous report from HMI against which to gauge improvement in the subject.
121. In Year 1, pupils make good use of their computer skills to support their learning in history. For example, they click and drag pictures of old 'things used 100 years ago to keep clean' into the correct chronological order. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have extended their knowledge and have a sound understanding of the past. Most pupils re-tell the story of Guy Fawkes and write lists of facts they know about Florence Nightingale, providing good links with literacy. Most girls and boys use the vocabulary of the subject to compare old and new kitchen and laundry equipment. This is evident when they write descriptions such as 'irons heating on a kitchen range' or 'a mangle for squeezing out water'.
122. By the end of Year 4, pupils show that they are developing an understanding of chronology by realising that the past can be divided into periods and they begin to use dates. This is

apparent when they compile a timeline for Victorian Britain and enter key events, such as Victoria's birth and death, with dates. They compare Victorian school life with their own. Most pupils use reference books to find an illustration of an artefact or research using the Internet and then record their findings. While pupils make satisfactory use of their literacy skills, they do not have sufficient opportunity to write creatively and imaginatively to enhance their historical understanding.

123. Of the only two lessons observed one was good and the other satisfactory. This, together with the evidence from an analysis of pupils' work and discussions with teachers, indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory, with strengths in some lessons, and in marking and expectations in Years 3 and 4. Pupils are well managed and have good opportunities to work co-operatively. There are examples of very good marking which successfully stimulates pupils' interest and communicates to the pupil that the teacher has high expectations of them. The extent to which pupils respond to this marking is impressive. For example, in response to, 'Well done, R _____. Tell me what the 3Rs are!', the pupil lists 'Reading, writing and arithmetic'. When a pupil has responded to constructive marking by adding some more work, the teacher sets a good example of valuing effort by writing, 'Thank you for adding more – good research'.
124. The co-ordinator has been doing the job for two years since joining the school. She has made a good start to developing systems for assessment and monitoring pupils' work. As a result, she is identifying priorities for development. These quite rightly include increasing the school's supply of artefacts in order to use the subject to develop pupils' powers of deduction and, therefore, more advanced reading skills. Similarly, the co-ordinator recognises that the most recent assessment materials require further adaptation in order to provide teachers with more useful information. The history curriculum is enriched by special events such as 'Roman Days' and 'Victorian Mornings'. The strengths in teaching contribute to the subject supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

125. By the ages of seven and nine, pupils' standards meet national expectations. They have improved since the previous inspection and the school has been successful in addressing the key issue to raise standards in the subject. Good quality teaching linked to the effective use of the school's 'ICT-Suite' has contributed significantly to improved standards. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning.
126. A significant strength of teaching is that in literacy and numeracy each 'set' is taught regularly in the 'ICT-Suite' and this makes a strong contribution to pupils using and applying key computer skills in literacy and numeracy. For example, in Year 1 pupils used a word bank and words of their own choosing to describe story characters like a fairy and a troll. In Year 3, pupils reinforced their knowledge and understanding of two-dimensional shapes by joining two shapes and identifying whether the new shapes formed were regular or irregular.
127. Pupils successfully use and apply computer skills in literacy, numeracy and other subjects. For example, in literacy pupils read e-mails then compose and send replies to pupils in local schools. In numeracy, pupils use data-handling programs to create graphs. They make good use of the Internet to carry out research in history.
128. By the end of Year 2, pupils are confident in the use of the mouse to 'click and drag', and keyboard skills are satisfactory for their age. They know how to 'log on' and 'log off' on the school network and most are confident in loading, saving and printing their work. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to use the interactive whiteboard to show the rest of the class how,

for example, to load a file from within a folder. In Year 2, pupils are successful in using data programs to answer questions such as, 'Are there any orange-coloured fruits with skins that you can eat?'

129. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 and 4. In Year 3 they show good skills in accessing e-mails and in entering e-mail addresses into the address book. They enjoy reading e-mails sent to them by their teacher or by pupils in other schools and work hard on composing their own replies. In Year 4, pupils show good skills in accessing the Internet, particularly to support their research in geography and history.
130. Teaching is good and contributes to the improved standards. There are strengths in teachers' use of the interactive whiteboard to demonstrate and teach new skills. Teachers make good use of pupils in using the whiteboard to show the rest of the class how, for example, to open a specific file within a folder. This is a good opportunity for teachers to assess pupils' skills. When learning support assistants are available, teachers make good use of them to make assessment notes in the whole-class introduction and then to support pupils when they are working at the computer. In such lessons, teachers do not consistently take the opportunity to work with groups of pupils around the interactive whiteboard to take learning forward.
131. The subject is effectively led and managed by the knowledgeable co-ordinator and this has made a positive contribution to the improved standards. Pupils benefit from the impressive 'ICT-Suite' with 16 computers, which means that they never have to work other than in pairs or individually. Assessment is good, with pupils having individual records of achievement, which show how they are progressing in the development of key skills. There is a good portfolio of pupils' work, which gives teachers clear examples of what they should achieve as they move up through the school. The Internet access policy is under review, but the current one is displayed clearly and has been shared with parents, with the result that they and pupils know they are safe from accessing unauthorised sites.

MUSIC

132. Evidence from lessons and lesson planning indicates that, by the end of Year 2 and Year 4, standards meet expectations for seven- and nine-year-olds. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Their learning is enhanced by the work of the school choir, which has well over 50 members of all ages. The previous inspection report did not focus on music so it is not possible to make any comparison of standards.
133. Recent improvements have seen the role of the subject co-ordinator developed further. The policy and lesson planning have been revised and updated. A good portfolio of pupils' work has been collated and monitoring has taken place. For assessment purposes a checklist of skills, which records individual pupils' progress, has been developed. Work has started on providing enrichment activities for pupils identified as being gifted and talented. The subject is well co-ordinated with an effective action plan for further development.
134. Evidence from lesson planning and that provided by the school shows that pupils receive a broad musical curriculum. The youngest pupils understand the difference between loud and soft sounds and put a simple pattern of sounds together, using voices and clapping their hands. They progressed quickly to following simple written sequences well. These pupils know the names of instruments and which instruments play loud or soft sounds. They could play short sequences with the instruments, conducted by the teacher. Pupils are given the opportunity to listen to each other perform and to suggest improvements. They learn new songs quickly and soon improve the quality of their performance. The

choir, for example, sang with good quality 'Drop in the Ocean' and performed to the whole school as part of their preparation for a performance to parents and governors.

135. The quality of teaching and learning in the two lessons seen was satisfactory. These lessons were well planned with suitable activities, and pupils behaved well, worked productively and made satisfactory progress. However, there are some good examples of work taking place, such as the choir, peripatetic work for violins and whole-school activity days. A recent activity day involved musicians, dancers and music from Africa. Work in music is inclusive for all pupils and full of opportunities to enrich their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
136. Links to other subjects, such as literacy, numeracy and history, are developed well. Resources are at least satisfactory, although the school would like to extend further their range. Pupils benefit from working with visiting musicians and performing in the local church and community. The work being undertaken in music is playing a major part in raising pupils' self-esteem and the profile of the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137. By the end of Year 2, pupils' standards in gymnastics, games and dance meet national expectations. The only work observed in Years 3 and 4 was in dance and in tactics for team games. In both these areas, standards meet expectations. Records show that standards in swimming are high for pupils of this age.
138. In Years 1 and 2, pupils understand the need for a warm-up before an activity. They collect their equipment sensibly and safely, and send and receive a medium-sized ball either by throwing and catching, or passing with their feet. They move around with the ball by dribbling it with their feet or bouncing it like a basketball. In gymnastics they find different ways of travelling and show a variety of shapes with their body. Many perform short sequences involving travelling and balances with various body shapes. They perform traditional country dances, which contribute to their social and cultural development, and try to create their own dance relating to a snowman.
139. In Year 3, pupils follow on from their country dance work by trying to make similar dances of their own, but have trouble in keeping to a regular eight-beat pattern. The Year 4 work observed was centred on working together as a team, and is part of the school's aim to foster co-operation amongst the pupils. This is working effectively and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' moral and social development. Pupils are beginning to understand that working together produces better results than working independently or even arguing.
140. Teaching is satisfactory in physical education, although there are areas of strength and areas for development. The areas of strength included:
- all teachers being changed for the lesson, setting a good example to pupils;
 - good attention to warming up and cooling down;
 - good attention to including all pupils, especially those with physical difficulties and those with special educational needs, often with the help of learning support assistants;
 - good encouragement of independence;
 - good use of pupils for demonstrations;
 - good emphasis on improving skills.
- These areas enable pupils to improve their skills and make satisfactory, or sometimes good, progress.
- The areas for improvement included:
- insufficient emphasis on the quality of pupils' movements;
 - too few teaching points or indications to pupils of how they can improve;

- insufficient attention to health and safety issues such as correct clothing, wearing jewellery, not tying back long hair, and chairs and other equipment protruding into the working space.

Where the first two points were evident, pupils did not make as much progress as they could have done.

141. The co-ordinator has a good knowledge and understanding of the subject, and gives help and advice to colleagues. However, a number of teachers are still insecure with some aspects of the curriculum and would benefit from further training. Insufficient emphasis is placed on lesson observations as a means of improving teachers' confidence and enabling the co-ordinator to know how the subject is being taught. Planning shows appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum. There is a good quantity of appropriate resources for pupils to be able to practise their skills. These are well stored and accessible. A highlight of the summer term is sports day, where all pupils participate in activities. About half of the pupils in Year 4 benefit from a residential trip where they experience a variety of outdoor activities, contributing to their moral and social development, as well as developing other skills.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

142. Pupils attain the level of knowledge and understanding expected in the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. There is no judgement in the previous report to enable a comparison between standards then and now. Pupils with special educational needs are included well in all lessons and so they make satisfactory progress alongside their peers.
143. By the end of Year 2, most boys and girls are beginning to understand the meanings that underlie symbols such as the Advent Wreath. They remember what each candle represents. They understand the symbolism of the Christingle orange. One pupil writes, for example, 'The holly is to remind you of Jesus'. When they write instructions on how to make an Advent wreath, they are using their literacy skills well. Similarly, writing prayers provides good opportunities for literacy, for example, 'Please help me not to fite (sic) with my sister'. Most pupils begin to make links between religious teaching and their own personal experience. This is apparent when they identify what they feel 'sorry for', with examples such as 'hitting mum'. Their knowledge of Old and New Testament stories is at the level expected for their age. For example, pupils in Year 1 know that Jesus 'showed Zaccheus he was special' and that Jesus 'talked to him'. In Year 2, their understanding is developing, so they know that Jonah received a message from God and that his dilemma was about doing either what he or what God wanted.
144. During the inspection, in a good lesson, pupils in Year 3 extended their knowledge and understanding well by relating symbols to their own lives. They understood that the school's system of 'golden badges' uses symbols, and began to discuss the 'message it gives'. Good expectations from the teacher boosted their self-esteem when she explained, 'I want you to come up with your own definitions which you could give to pupils in Year 2'. By the end of Year 4, pupils build successfully on their knowledge of faiths and their understanding of their impact. This is evident in their work on Hinduism when they describe traditional Hindu stories and compare similar Hindu and Christian values, such as caring for one's family. In this work they make good use of their writing skills to 'write about an image'. For example, one more-able girl writes, '*Hindus believe that God is everywhere, just like the spray you spray, you can't see it but you can smell your scent*'.
144. Teaching is satisfactory, with strengths in some lessons. Strengths in teaching lie in:
- very good promotion of caring attitudes;
 - very good questioning that stimulates pupils' thinking;

- capturing pupils' imaginations with very good story-telling techniques, so pupils learn well;
- well-prepared resources that help to hold pupils' attention very well.

Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 use a 'symbol challenge game', which also makes good use of their literacy skills as they read and record their answers.

145. The subject is led well because the co-ordinator's considerable enthusiasm means that she attends courses and implements the ideas that have been generated. For example, she recently provided colleagues with ideas for developing the 'Christmas curriculum' and associated assessment tasks. She has evaluated the work and is seeking to develop it further. She has made a good start to working with pupils selected by their class teacher as being particularly strong in this subject, although not necessarily in literacy. This is evident in the work produced by these mixed-year groups having discussed difficult questions arising from photographs from around the world. A result of this work was some moving prayers from older pupils who wrote, for example, *'Please help the poor people of the world and stop all wars'* and *'Dear God, Let's stop War's cruelty'*. Throughout the school, the curriculum and strengths in teaching mean that this subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.