

INSPECTION REPORT

MERRIOTT FIRST SCHOOL

Merriott, Crewkerne

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123654

Headteacher: MrJames Peate

Reporting inspector: Mrs Joyce Cox
25074

Dates of inspection: 27 - 30 January 2003

Inspection number: 248483

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9 Years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Street Merriott Somerset
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs C Szczepanski
Date of previous inspection:	24 -27 November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25074	Mrs Joyce Cox	Registered Inspector	English Science Art and design Physical education History Foundation Stage	What sort of a school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9644	Mr Mike Whitaker	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12116	Mrs Christina Morgan	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Religious education Special educational needs Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a first school situated in the village of Merriott close to the town of Crewkerne. Pupils who attend the school live locally and come from a mixture of private and local-authority housing. Over the past few years a growing and significant minority of pupils (approximately 20 per cent) come from outside the catchment area. Most pupils are from white European backgrounds and there are no pupils whose mother tongue is not English. The school is much smaller than most primary schools and there are 51 boys and 55 girls aged between four and nine. Children's attainment on entry into the reception class is average. About 3.9 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average. No pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Need. The school was awarded a 'School Achievement Award' for substantial improvements in national test scores in 1997 and 2000.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school and one that strives for continuous improvement. It has a warm and very caring ethos in which moral values and a good team spirit underpin its many successes. The headteacher provides very clear educational direction. Teaching is good overall and pupils make good progress during their time in school. Pupils have very good attitudes to school, behave well and work hard. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Standards are above average in science, geography and history by the end of Year 4.
- The quality of teaching is good and enables pupils to achieve well.
- The very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development fosters the excellent relationships and the very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development of all pupils.
- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and management.
- The school has very good links with its parents and the local community.

What could be improved

- The use of assessment to track pupils' progress.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The considerable workload of the headteacher.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been good improvement since the previous inspection in 1997. Standards achieved by seven year olds in national tests have been above average in reading, writing and mathematics since 2000. Standards have risen in information and communication technology, art and design, and technology due to increased staff confidence and improvements in planning and teaching. The quality of teaching has risen dramatically in Year 4 because of staff changes. The excellent relationships reflect the ethos of mutual respect, which permeates the school. There are good systems to assess pupils' progress,

but not enough use is made of assessment information to track pupils' achievements and to match work to their needs.

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			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	A	D	A	B
Writing	B	C	B	C
Mathematics	B	C	B	C

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

Children start the reception year with average levels of attainment. They make good progress and the majority attain the Early Learning Goals (the nationally expected standards) in all areas of learning. Some children exceed these in language, literacy and mathematics. All children make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills.

Pupils achieve well in Years 1 and 2. They attained well above average results in reading and above average results in writing and mathematics in the 2002 national test at the end of Year 2. There are small numbers of pupils taking the national tests each year, which makes statistical analysis somewhat unreliable. Pupils' results since 2000 have been above the expected levels in English, mathematics and science. Standards seen during the inspection confirm the above average results in reading and writing. Standards in science are above average. Standards are as expected in history, geography, physical education and music, and pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the scheme used by most schools in Somerset. Pupils attain average levels in art and design, information and communication technology, and design and technology, which is an improvement since the last inspection, when attainment in these subjects was judged to be below that of other seven year olds.

Pupils' achievement in Years 3 and 4 is good and they make good progress. They attain above the expected levels for Year 4 pupils in English, mathematics, science, geography and history. In other subjects they attain as expected.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all subjects. The fact that they are withdrawn for additional reading and small group work means that they miss vital parts of lessons.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard. They admire, trust and respect the adults who work with them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils get on very well together and are considerate towards others. They are well behaved in lessons and around

	the school. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The quality of relationships is a strength of the school. Pupils have lots of opportunities to take responsibility. Year 4 pupils play an important part in the school's day-to-day routines.
Attendance	Good. The school's attendance level is above that of most primary schools nationally. Pupils are keen to arrive at school on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Teaching has improved since the time of the previous inspection despite considerable staff changes. The school's good attention to the professional development of staff, particularly its approach to performance management, is having a positive impact on improving teaching quality. The headteacher sets the standard with his own good teaching. Teaching in the reception class is of a high quality.

Teaching in Years 1 to 4 is good overall and is leading to pupils making good progress in literacy and numeracy. Teachers plan lessons carefully to cater for different ages, and pupils are managed very well so that they learn effectively. The areas for improvement in teaching are the quality of teachers' marking and the use of assessment to plan work for pupils of different abilities and in particular the lower attaining pupils.

Relationships are excellent and teachers encourage pupils to be confident and try, even if they do not succeed at first.

There are classroom assistants in all the classes and they make an invaluable contribution to pupils' learning. They are confident, competent and valued by the teachers and the governing body.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school plans a broad and balanced curriculum with good strategies for literacy and numeracy. The provision made for pupils' personal development is highly relevant and effective. A good extra-curricular programme provides enrichment.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. There are a small number of pupils with special educational needs in the school. They receive good support from teachers and class assistants in lessons. Careful consideration needs to be given to the value of withdrawal sessions as pupils miss important learning opportunities when they leave their classes.

Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development in assemblies and in lessons. Provision for their moral and social development is excellent. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and take their responsibilities seriously. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to mature, as everyone's talents are valued. Good provision is made for pupils' cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has good procedures for taking care of its pupils. Great importance is placed on creating a caring, calm atmosphere. There are good systems for assessing pupils' work, but not enough use is made of assessment information to track progress and plan work.

The school maintains very good links with parents. Virtually all parents are very pleased with the school and feel very comfortable in approaching it with problems or concerns.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides very good leadership. He has a considerable teaching commitment. The management structure does not ensure that he receives the maximum support. Subject co-ordinators and all staff work very hard and take responsibility for playing a positive part in the running of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	They do this well. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They are very effective in supporting the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Attention is paid to ensuring that best-value principles are applied to all areas of evaluating the school's performance and setting the right priorities for improvement. This is a school that welcomes change that leads to benefits for all pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial planning is very thorough and makes sure that the priorities for improvement are fully supported. The school considers the principles of best value carefully when planning and reviewing spending.

The school has a good number of teachers and teaching assistants to meet the demands of the curriculum. The accommodation is satisfactory, but there is still no secure outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage, and the school hall, which is used for physical education, is small and narrow and restricts certain aspects of gymnastics.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most parents say that their children like school and make good progress.• All parents feel that behaviour in the school is good.• Parents believe that the school is well led and managed.• All of the parents would feel very comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.• Teaching is good and children are expected to work hard and do their best.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A very small number of parents feel that their children do not get the right amount of homework.• A very small number of parents feel that there could be more activities outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees wholeheartedly with parents' positive comments.

In the opinion of the inspectors the school provides a suitable amount of homework and there is a good range of extra-curricular activities, especially for a small school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Since the time of the 1997 inspection the school has made good progress in ensuring that the majority of pupils achieve their personal best. Standards have improved in English and mathematics. Year 2 pupils achieve expected standards in science, as they did at the time of the last inspection. Standards have risen in art and design, information and communication technology, and design and technology by the end of Year 2 as a result of increased staff expertise and improved planning.
2. In the national tests in 2002, Year 2 pupils achieved well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Test results are above those of pupils in similar schools in reading, whilst in writing and mathematics they are the same. There are a small number of pupils taking the test each year, which makes statistical analysis somewhat unreliable. Since 2000, pupils' results have been above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
3. Children enter the reception class with average levels of skills and knowledge. They make good progress as a result of very good teaching and an exciting curriculum, and by the time they enter Year 1 many children attain the expected level in language, literacy and mathematics. A small number of higher attaining children exceed the expected levels.
4. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that standards at the end of Year 2 are above average in these areas and also above average in science. Pupils achieve well and attain average standards in all the other subjects.
5. During the inspection the attainment of pupils in Year 4 was judged to be above average in English, mathematics, science, history and geography and average in all the other subjects. All pupils make good progress in English, mathematics, science, history and geography. Pupils make sound progress in design and technology, information and communication technology, art, religious education and physical education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning, which represents an improvement on the good attitudes noted in the previous inspection. The youngest children in the reception class are secure in their daily routines. They are content to leave parents and carers, and settle confidently to the day's work. They enjoy their learning and are keen to share that enjoyment, as was demonstrated, for example, by two girls who were eager to show how well they had learned the prayer for that day's assembly. Older pupils show interest and enthusiasm, and respond well to a lively, purposeful learning environment, as was seen in a Year 3/4 science lesson, in which pupils were studying electrical circuits and designing a torch. Pupils of all ages are well motivated and hard working. They are keen to make contributions in lessons and persevere in the face of difficulties.
7. Behaviour is very good, an improvement upon the good behaviour seen at the last inspection. Pupils respond very well to the excellent social and moral tone set by the

school. In lessons, the majority comply readily with the class rules which they themselves have drawn up. The few, younger, pupils who cannot resist calling out do so more out of excitement and eagerness than from a lack of consideration. Movement about the school is orderly. At play, pupils are lively and energetic, but there is no evidence of aggression or oppressive behaviour. The school is an inclusive community and all pupils, regardless of ability or background, are fully involved; there is no evidence of bullying, sexism or racist attitudes. Lunch is taken in the classrooms in a happy, chatty and sociable atmosphere. School equipment and buildings are treated with respect and there is no sign of litter. There have been no exclusions.

8. Pupils' personal development is good. They are responsible and mature, and display self-discipline and caring attitudes. Older pupils are happy to look after younger ones and help voluntarily in clearing up after lunch. Pupils demonstrate supportive attitudes towards children with difficulties. In lessons, they work co-operatively in pairs and groups. They respond well to the school's moral code; for example, readily apologising when they have done wrong. Older pupils are developing the ability for independent study; for example, responding to opportunities for researching topics at home, through libraries or on the Internet.
9. Relationships are excellent, which represents a considerable improvement on the good relationships noted in the previous report. In accordance with the prevailing ethos of care and consideration, pupils treat each other with sensitivity. Staff treat pupils with respect; in lessons all contributions are valued, thus encouraging and boosting the self-esteem of the less confident pupils. Adults in school provide very good role models of co-operative working.
10. Attendance is good. The present attendance rate of 94.1 per cent is above the national average for primary schools, and unauthorised absence, at 0.2 per cent, is below the national average. The great majority of pupils arrive punctually at the start of the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. Teaching is better overall than at the time of the previous inspection, as none was judged unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is very good in the reception class and good in Years 1 to 4. The improvement in teaching is the result of good monitoring and feedback on the quality of individual teacher's performance by the headteacher and the school advisor. Additionally, guidance has been produced for all subjects to assist teachers' planning. Teachers have successfully implemented national strategies in literacy and numeracy, which have given structure to lessons. They have also attended training in many subjects. Many teachers set out key learning objectives in lessons and these are shared with the pupils so they know exactly what they have to learn.
12. The teaching in the reception class is very good. The teacher and the classroom assistant make sure that children make a very happy and positive start to school through very good emphasis on the development of their personal and social skills. Routines are established quickly and children make very good gains in their personal development. The direct teaching of formal aspects of literacy and mathematics is thorough and the activities provided are carefully chosen to keep within the limits of the young children's short attention spans. There are excellent opportunities for children to select and pursue an activity independently.

13. The teaching of literacy is good overall. Early reading strategies are taught well and many teachers share learning objectives with the pupils so they are clear what the literacy lesson is about. Most teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, which has a very positive effect on pupils' learning and progress. In the Year 2/3 class there is a very good focus on encouraging pupils to offer their opinions. Work is matched well to different ages, and good support ensures that those pupils with comprehension difficulties achieve appropriately. Occasionally, the pace of literacy lessons is too slow, and pupils are kept sitting too long on the carpet, become bored and lose interest. Work sampling reveals that there is too much use of unsuitable worksheets in some classes, which hinders pupils' progress.
14. The teaching of numeracy is good. Good teaching and learning are characterised by teachers who use their good knowledge and understanding of mathematics to set interesting, challenging activities. Increasingly, they encourage pupils to solve problems in their own way and they use questions skilfully. This is very evident in the Year 3/4 class. By sharing methods, pupils learn from each other and develop confidence to tackle new work successfully. Teachers build effectively on previous learning and maintain a brisk pace, moving from one activity to the next in a well-organised way. They encourage pupils to complete homework to develop their skills and promote independent learning.
15. Only a small number of lessons were observed in science, art, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. The majority of the lessons seen were judged to be good. In the very best lessons, pupils are given challenging work such as devising a fair test in science and are encouraged to tackle experiments for themselves. All pupils are involved through skilled questioning, no time is wasted and pupils are busy, motivated and productive. The Year 3/4 teacher has high expectations of work and presentation and as a result pupils' written work in many subjects is of a high standard.
16. Positive features of teaching, demonstrated throughout the school by all teachers, include good subject knowledge, good planning, excellent management of pupils and good use of support staff. Learning-support staff make an invaluable contribution to both teaching and learning. They are well focused on individual needs in lessons and are highly effective in assisting the pupils they work with to make good gains in learning.
17. However, the pace at which a few lessons are conducted is rather slow. For instance, in some lessons pupils become bored and inattentive when they are given simple worksheets to complete. The quality of teachers' marking varies. There are very few comments on pupils' work indicating how they can improve. In some cases there are large numbers of worksheets, which are not marked or dated, so it is difficult to determine pupils' progress.
18. The quality of in-class support provided for lower attaining pupils is good. It is effective in giving them all full access to the curriculum. Pupils benefit from additional support with literacy. However, the policy of withdrawing pupils for extra support for reading is neither cost-effective nor efficient in meeting their needs. For example, less than five minutes of the 20-minute withdrawal time is spent in one-to-one support. As pupils miss essential elements of the broader curriculum, they are put at a disadvantage in relation to the other pupils. Homework is used well and set at the appropriate level.

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

19. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, with a suitable emphasis on the core subjects of English and mathematics. Appropriate coverage of all other subjects has been maintained, and relevant and meaningful links have been established between subjects. Information technology is used very effectively to support learning across the curriculum. Good literacy and numeracy skills effectively underpin progress in other subjects, and good opportunities are provided for pupils to write at length, particularly in history and geography.
20. The planning for most subjects is based on national guidelines, but these have been evaluated and adapted to create a curriculum, which is relevant and interesting for the pupils. For example, the local area is used extensively as a focus for work in history and geography, and the school has won an award for an environmental-studies initiative, working with a local farm. The schemes of work for art and religious education are successfully based on county guidelines.
21. A good balance is achieved in most subjects between structured teaching and opportunities for pupils to use their own ideas and initiative. Topics begun in school are spontaneously extended and developed at home, and parents are strongly involved in supporting the curriculum. Homework is not tightly structured, but in practice a great deal of extension work for school activities happens at home. This develops pupils' understanding and reflects their enthusiasm for the topics being studied.
22. Personal, social and health education does not have precise boundaries but is effectively integrated into other curriculum areas. Circle time is not regularly timetabled but occurs as appropriate, when it is felt that there are particular issues which need exploring. Drugs and health education is integrated into the science curriculum.
23. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The quality of in-class support provided for lower attaining pupils is good and is effective in giving them all access to the curriculum. However, the policy of withdrawing pupils for support, results in their missing significant parts of the broader curriculum. As a result, they are put at a disadvantage in relation to the other pupils.
24. The school is firmly rooted in the community and makes a valuable contribution to village life. Links with the church are close and the school's Christmas performance and harvest assembly are regularly held in the church. The vicar takes regular assemblies in school. Local residents are involved with history and geography projects; for example, by contributing a photographic record of the village. The school is currently preparing an exhibition of pupils' art for the school hall.
25. The school works closely with other small schools in the area and has been involved in several initiatives. These include a music and drama production based on the theme of citizenship and the shared use of laptop computers, which enable key information technology skills to be taught in the absence of an information and communication technology suite.
26. Links with the on-site pre-school are strong, and good links have been established within the local pyramid of schools. Regular curriculum links establish continuity of

provision, and joint initiatives focus on particular areas for improvement. A recent focus on improving pupils' writing has been particularly beneficial. Older pupils attend events at the middle school to which most of them transfer. For example, they go to concerts and have been involved in a choral project. The gymnastics coach from the middle school has worked with pupils from Merriott, who then gave a display in Crewkerne. This coaching had a considerable impact on pupils' gymnastic skills.

27. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good and its provision for pupils' moral and social development is outstanding. It operates within a positive Christian framework and underpins the whole ethos of the school. It makes a fundamental contribution to the success of pupils' learning. In assemblies and in religious education lessons, pupils are given opportunities to reflect on the underlying ideas behind Bible stories and to apply them to their own lives.
28. Morning assemblies set the tone for much of the day. Pupils' achievements are regularly celebrated and they not only enjoy telling each other about their involvement in activities, but also value the chance to listen to each other. The school is an essential part of the community, and its appreciation of this role is the key to its work in helping pupils flourish, and develop curiosity towards the world around them. They are encouraged to ask questions and to explore and test ideas. From the reception class onwards, pupils respond enthusiastically to the opportunities which the school provides. For instance, the youngest children explore the possibilities of percussion instruments and the oldest listen carefully to the lyrics of Beatles songs in a poetry lesson. One pupil explains her fervent commitment to Yeovil Town football club, whilst another pupil has made a Viking helmet for her history topic in celebration of her Viking ancestry.
29. Although expectations of behaviour are not formalised, the overriding ethos of the school is one where every member of the community has a duty of care and respect for others. Teachers set an excellent example through their willingness to listen, their consistency in applying fundamental rules of considerate behaviour and the way in which all pupils' contributions to the life of the school are valued. New pupils, even those who have had difficulties in other schools, immediately pick up on the prevailing ethos and respond positively. Pupils are aware of the feelings of others, as evidenced by the pupil who felt very concerned that his headteacher might be worried about the inspection! Teachers expect that all pupils will work together co-operatively, and in response pupils are happy to share ideas and ensure that activities include all members of the class. Lessons are calm, purposeful and productive, and pupils invariably behave in a responsible and self-disciplined way, even when not directly supervised by an adult. As a result, teachers feel confident in encouraging a high degree of independent learning and pupil initiative.
30. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is good and ensures that they are fully aware of the history and traditions of their rural community while also developing an awareness of a diverse range musical and artistic genres. The school provides an effective balance between celebrating the wide range of experiences which pupils bring to school and a broadening of their cultural horizons. Pupils become aware of different world cultures through their work on India in geography and on Hinduism in religious education lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The school has good procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare, as was the case at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher is the designated

person for child-protection purposes. Information regarding cases of concern is shared amongst the teaching staff; support staff and parent volunteers are aware of the action to be taken in such instances. Parent volunteers have been cleared by the relevant authorities as suitable to work with children. The school's health and safety procedures are overseen by the premises committee of the governing body; the premises are regularly inspected. Risk assessments are carried out on school activities such as off-site visits. The procedures for getting children across the road to the village hall for physical education lessons are safe, efficient and well rehearsed. All necessary procedures for ensuring pupils' safety are in place; there is first-aid provision in case of accident; fire drills are carried out and there are contracts in place for regular safety inspections of equipment, including play apparatus.

32. There are good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. Registration is carried out promptly and efficiently. Class teachers, who know their pupils very well, swiftly identify any attendance problems. When a child is unexpectedly absent the school phones the home. If necessary, the services of an education social worker are available. Whilst some families do take holidays in term-time, the number is not so great as to pose the school a problem. Most pupils are prompt in arriving for school; any individual problems are handled by the headteacher.
33. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. The very high behavioural standards seen are largely a product of the school's ethos, staff's high expectations and skilled pupil management, together with exciting and stimulating lessons. Virtually all parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their children like school. Pupils themselves are involved in drawing up their own class rules and staff are consistent in their approach to discipline. Bullying is not seen as an issue by parents, any instances being swiftly and effectively dealt with. The school has the necessary machinery in place for dealing with racist incidents, but to date there have been none. Issues regarding attitudes to other races, lifestyles, cultures and faiths are discussed in religious education lessons and assemblies.
34. Personal development is well supported, albeit informally. The size of the school ensures that all children are well known to all adults, and the school's ethos and excellent relationships ensure that no child's personal or emotional needs go unrecognised.
35. The school's procedures for assessing attainment and progress are good. The headteacher and staff know their pupils well and look closely at their work to make judgements about the progress they are making and the standards they are likely to achieve. The school uses a variety of means to do this and assessments are made termly in most subjects
36. From these assessments some teachers set group and, sometimes, individual targets for their pupils to work hard to achieve. In some cases, pupils' individual learning needs are not always clearly defined. For instance, there are no targets for numeracy on special educational needs pupils' individual education plans. Given that there were an above average number of pupils attaining below the expected level in mathematics in the 2002 Year 2 national tests, this is a serious omission.
37. Recently the school has recognised the need to use information and communication technology to interpret assessment information quickly and accurately. The school wisely plans to put a system in place to enable teachers and support staff to track individual pupil's progress and to predict more accurately the standards they should

achieve. The system would also analyse overall strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning and raise standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. The school has created good, effective links with parents. The school is a 'parent-friendly place,' as may be seen from the relaxed atmosphere in the mornings, when parents deliver children to their classrooms. These brief, informal interactions are much appreciated by parents and serve to ensure that minor issues are swiftly resolved. One parent at the pre-inspection meeting described the relationship between school and parents as, "Just perfect". Parents are welcome at school events, such as Harvest or end-of-term services in the village church, Christmas drama productions or sports day. Information for parents is good. The school prospectus and governors' annual report are informative and easily readable. The governors, as part of their annual reporting procedure, ask parents to identify three strengths of the school and three areas for improvement. Parents have three formal opportunities a year to meet their children's teachers. Pupil reports are good, providing considerable detail about the children's attainment and progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Parents like and value the school's style of report. In addition to regular newsletters, which give good notice of school events, the school provides termly information about the topics which the children will be studying.
39. Parents make a very good contribution to children's learning at school and at home. A number of parents work voluntarily in school, both in classrooms and in supporting extra-curricular activities. They help with maintenance and improvement in the grounds and provide additional supervision on school trips. They support the school's homework policy and help children at home by encouraging independent research in libraries or on the Internet. Home-school reading records are well used as a vehicle for dialogue. The 'friends' association is lively and vigorous and acts as a very effective social link as well as a raiser of funds for the school.
40. Parents hold very positive views of the school. They are happy with standards, care, values and children's behaviour. They particularly appreciate the ready approachability of staff and the school's family ethos. Of the respondents to the pre-inspection questionnaire (at 40 per cent, an above average sample) all felt that the school was well led and managed and that teaching was good. There were two areas of concern; 15 per cent were not happy with the amount of homework, and 22 per cent were unhappy with the range of out-of-school activities. Inspection evidence is that the use of homework is good, as is the range of extra-curricular activities, which includes visits and visitors as well as after-school clubs. As a matter of policy, the headteacher and governors have decided that after-school clubs are best suited to children from Years 3 and 4 only.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The strengths identified in leadership and management at the time of the previous inspection have all been sustained and in some instances improved even further. The school is now better than it was and is continuing to become even more effective. It is a well-organised and successful school, which looks critically at all aspects of its performance and strives constantly to improve.

42. The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction for the school. He has a total conviction about the priorities and aims of the school, and is immensely determined and highly motivated. He has a considerable teaching responsibility for a Year 3/4 class and since September has had very little non-contact time due to the illness of his support job-share teacher. He carries out all his duties cheerfully and conscientiously, and sets the standard for teaching and learning through his own skilful teaching. He has high expectations of himself and is a perfectionist, working long hours at class and management responsibilities. There is an urgent need to review the management structure to ensure that he receives the maximum support and learns to delegate more!
43. The headteacher leads the school very well. When priorities for improvement have been identified, usually through a specific and constantly-evolving school-development plan, but occasionally in day-to-day management, he acts very quickly and decisively. The outcome is the strong team spirit within the school staff. There is a good degree of shared commitment by all the staff to improve standards and to provide a calm, harmonious environment where all pupils are valued and make good progress. Highly effective leadership is evident in the successful implementation of national strategies for literacy and numeracy, in the much-improved monitoring of teaching and pupils' attainment to ensure good achievement, and in the rigorous analysis of the school's performance in order to set targets for the future.
44. The school's aims and values lie at the heart of all that it does, and the school succeeds in providing a good education for all pupils. The creation of a civilised, supportive learning environment sets the scene for the hard work and achievement expected from all the pupils. The culture is such that new strategies are readily adopted and tested out and then carefully adapted to meet the specific needs of the school.
45. Co-ordinators make a good contribution to the development of their subjects. This marks a further significant improvement since the time of the previous inspection. They review policy and resources, provide guidance for other staff and monitor teachers' planning. The commitment to continued improvement is a major factor in the good progress that is achieved in many subjects. The special educational needs co-ordinator maintains an overview of provision and undertakes liaison with outside agencies. The new Code of Practice is fully in place.
46. The governors' role in monitoring the work of the school has improved considerably since the last inspection. The governing body is well organised through an effective committee structure. All statutory requirements are met. The chair of governors is very knowledgeable about the role and responsibilities of the governing body and has a good understanding of all areas of school life. Governors are fully involved in the school and they demonstrate a clear understanding of their monitoring role. Some governors work regularly in school alongside the staff and are in an ideal position to monitor standards. The governing body concentrates suitably on the important issues of standards, care, ethos and pupils' progress, whilst ensuring good value for money. Governors are playing an effective role in shaping the direction of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
47. The school has a detailed and comprehensive procedure for monitoring and evaluating its own performance. All staff are involved in this, and the open and frank approach means that issues are addressed quickly and effectively. The analysis of assessment information is not sufficiently focused, for instance, if there is an unexpected drop in standards, the school needs to consider whether adjustments

need to be made to teaching, learning or the curriculum. The school's systems for performance management have improved since the last inspection, when the appraisal of staff was 'progressing slowly', and they are now more closely linked to school improvement. Suitable training is identified to support any objectives identified for individual teachers. Induction procedures for new staff are good. Teachers new to the school have received good support from all staff and in particular the headteacher. New staff have good opportunities to learn from their experienced colleagues and have been given good support in developing their own teaching.

48. The school makes good use of the strategic resources that it has available. The school has wisely retained a considerable sum of money for building work and to ensure sufficient levels of staffing. The well-written school improvement plan makes it clear where priorities lie and what needs to be done to achieve them. The school's financial planning is very good and closely tied to this plan. This means that it uses the financial resources available to achieve its stated aims. The finance committee of the governing body monitors expenditure very carefully to make sure that, as the year progresses, it closely matches what is actually happening. Simple but effective measures are used by the committee to assess the effect that the planned spending has on the performance of the pupils, through visits by governors to observe classes in action or by discussion with co-ordinators or the headteacher.
49. The day-to-day administration of the school is very good, and efficient systems are in place that ensure that the governing body and headteacher have up-to-date information to use when monitoring and making decisions. The local education authority last audited the school in January 2003, when there were a number of areas highlighted for improvement. Many of these improvements have been implemented already.
50. Good use is made of funds allocated to the school for specific purposes. These include curriculum development as well as funds for further training of teachers and support staff. Their use is carefully monitored by the headteacher and the administration officer in the school, as well as by the finance committee of the governing body, by using the school-improvement plan. The governing body has successfully adopted the principles of 'best value', which has benefited the school in a range of ways. Governors understand the importance of these principles and know that applying them rigorously can bring benefits to the pupils.
51. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of financial management was excellent and these standards have been maintained. The school administration officer works very hard and manages the school budget skilfully and successfully in conjunction with the headteacher. However, the fact that she is only employed for four days each week adds to the headteacher's workload.
52. In some aspects; for example, the use of best-value principles, and the very rigorous marriage of financial planning to the school improvement plan, the quality of the work of the governing body work has continued to improve. This is making a good contribution to the school's drive to improve standards. Taking into account the overall effectiveness of the school, the efficiency with which it is run and its overall cost-effectiveness, the school gives good value for money.
53. The school has a good number of teachers and teaching assistants to meet the demands of the curriculum and pupils' needs. The school administrator, the caretaker and the lunchtime supervisors are an important and valued part of the school team. All staff work well as a dedicated, enthusiastic and hardworking team

who are committed to providing the best they can for all pupils. The school ethos is reinforced through the very positive way that all visitors are welcomed to the school. Everyone plays a full part in maintaining the attractive and tidy learning environment, reflecting the pride all staff show in their work.

54. Accommodation is satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage still do not have their own enclosed outdoor area which is easily accessible from their classroom. There are impressive plans in place to develop the outside area in order to ensure that young children have regular outdoor activities. Some large toys have also been purchased, although there is no climbing frame. A large playground and a well-maintained playing field provide appropriately for most aspects of physical education and play. The lack of a suitable hall on the premises inhibits some aspects of the gymnastic curriculum. The school makes very good use of the nearby school hall for physical education lessons, but it is long, narrow and not ideal for large classes. Whole-school assemblies take place in the Year 3/4 class and the headteacher and the older pupils are proficient and swift furniture removers!
55. Teachers have access to a suitable range of good-quality resources to support pupils' learning and ensure good progress. There have been substantial improvements made to resources in English, and information and communication technology. There are more reference books for religious education and history, and pupils and staff make good use of the Internet to supplement resources in many subjects. There is a growing range of suitable software to meet the needs of the curriculum for information and communication technology. Resources are good for pupils with special educational needs, but most are stored in the special educational needs base room and are not easily accessible to teachers.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. The school is providing an effective education for pupils. To make it even better the head teacher, staff and governors should:
- improve the use of assessment information to track pupils' progress; (Paragraphs 36, 37, 85)
 - consider carefully the withdrawal from lessons of pupils with special educational needs in order that they do not miss important parts of lessons and have full access and entitlement to the National Curriculum; (Paragraph 18, 23)
 - seek ways to diminish the workload of the headteacher. (Paragraphs 43, 51)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	30
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	7	17	4	0	0	0
Percentage	6	24	57	13	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		106
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		12

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	8	14	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	6
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	20	20	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (82)	91 (91)	86 (95)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	6	7
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	20	18	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (91)	82 (100)	91 (100)
	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
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background

No of pupils on roll
104
0
2
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group

0
0
0
0
0

0	0
0	0
0	0
0	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)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.09
Average class size	26.5

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	125

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	April 01 - March 02
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	£
Total income	248,142
Total expenditure	244,097
Expenditure per pupil	2,393
Balance brought forward from previous year	31,624
Balance carried forward to next year	35,669

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.4

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	106
Number of questionnaires returned	41

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	22	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	63	37	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	56	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	49	15	0	2
The teaching is good.	76	24	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	51	5	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	27	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	32	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	44	46	5	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	76	24	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	41	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	34	17	5	5

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

57. The previous report stated that there was good provision for children in the Foundation Stage and since then the provision has improved even further and is now very good. The teacher in the reception class is proficient at planning and delivering an exciting and stimulating curriculum where children learn through a skilful mix of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Her 'bouncy,' charismatic personality inspires the children. Together with the highly competent classroom assistant she ensures that the reception children are given a happy, lively, relevant and interesting start to their school life.
58. At the time of the inspection there were 18 children in the reception class. Excellent relationships have been established between the children, the teacher and the highly skilled class assistant. The well-organised day-to-day routines enable all children to feel secure, safe and happy, and to grow in confidence. They are admitted to the reception class in the September of the year in which they will become five. Most of the children have already attended either a pre-school playgroup or nursery. Children's attainment on entry to the reception class is average. The teacher uses results from assessments very well to group children and to set targets for each ability group. As a result of the very good teaching all pupils make at least good progress and the majority attain the Early Learning Goals (the nationally expected standards) in all areas of their learning by the time they enter Year 1. Some higher attaining children achieve above the expected levels, particularly in literacy and mathematical development.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. All children attain the Early Learning Goals in this area by the time they enter Year 1. This shows good achievement and reflects the sensitive teaching which constantly encourages children to feel confident about what they can achieve. They settle in well and quickly learn to share and take turns. The trusting relationships help children to recognise that each of them is valued. The two adults working with them in the reception class are infinitely patient, lively, courteous and encouraging, and their approach successfully promotes children's learning. Children quickly learn to sit quietly and take turns when speaking in response to questions. Their behaviour in and out of the classroom is very good and they willingly tidy up at the end of a session. During whole-school assemblies they listen carefully and join in the singing and prayers. The children attend to their personal hygiene very well, putting on painting aprons for themselves, and they can take off their shoes, socks and jumpers independently before their physical education lessons. The children enjoy learning, particularly when involved in play activities. They are eager to share what they have learnt, and talk happily about what they are doing. For example, as a child finished her 'mixed-media' picture, she announced, 'It's lovely, isn't it?' The children have settled extremely well to the more structured activities, such as literacy and numeracy, and show the ability to concentrate for long periods of time.
60. Personal and social development is promoted very well and strategies to encourage children to communicate are very good. The reception teacher and the classroom assistant have created a lively yet secure environment in which all children are valued as individuals. There are excellent opportunities provided for children to choose

activities for themselves and to initiate their own ideas through play. For instance, the role-play area is imaginatively adapted to allow the children to recreate their own versions of the story 'We're going on a Bear Hunt.' They happily use props and musical instruments to help them imagine they are going through the 'long wavy grass' or the 'thick squelchy mud.' The children have made many of the resources themselves and it is particularly impressive that all the displays in the classroom are their own work, skilfully displayed by the staff.

Communication, language and literacy

61. Children enter school with average attainment in this aspect of their learning. In particular, their communication skills are good. By the end of the reception year all children use talk to interact with others, listen attentively and respond with enjoyment to stories and rhymes. They make good progress and all achieve the Early Learning Goals in reading, writing, speaking and listening. The higher attaining children exceed the expected levels and have considerable confidence when speaking to other children and adults. For instance, one child kindly corrected the inspector who had mistaken the colour of the 'iceberg' in the water tray. The child said, 'It's purple really, but don't worry. I get things wrong too sometimes!' The teacher has some excellent strategies for encouraging reluctant communicators. For example, Gregory the bear goes home each night with a different child who confidently recounts the bear's adventures to the rest of the class, forgetting to be shy about talking in a large group, as they are talking for Gregory.
62. All children benefit from individual support and lots of encouragement. Adults show children that they value their efforts at communicating. The children listen carefully and particularly enjoy listening to stories. The most confident ones express their own ideas and feelings well and willingly talk about their favourite parts of the story in books they know, such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', and in some instances give different voices to the characters. They know that pictures carry meaning and understand the concept of a word. They use and understand the terms 'author' and 'illustrator' and are learning to identify publishers, excitedly telling their teacher that they have spotted another 'Walker' book! By the end of the reception year the more able children recognise familiar words in simple texts and use their knowledge of sounds well to help them read simple words and sentences. Most children confidently 'have a go' at writing and express themselves by making marks on paper. The more able children successfully use their knowledge of letter sounds when they write simple sentences. All children write their names on their work unaided. The analysis of children's work shows good examples of writing for a variety of purposes through play, such as letters to friends to be placed on the class letter board.
63. Teaching is very good. A good understanding of letter sounds is developed through the use of a commercially produced scheme, and children can name and sound letters of the alphabet by the end of the reception year. Children are provided with an exciting range of activities to develop their use of language through role play and have made captions for class displays. They confidently write their names on artwork and communicate well with each other when playing in the sand and the water and when constructing with large bricks.

Mathematical development

64. Children's mathematical abilities are average when they start school. Most children reach the expected standards by the end of the reception year. Higher attaining children exceed the expected levels. Most children can count beyond 20 out loud. All

children can count forwards and backwards from ten. Children are very independent in mathematical activities, organising games themselves and sensibly sharing resources. Very good use is made of computer programmes to encourage the children to order objects by size. They can all use mathematical language such as 'full', 'empty', 'half full', and 'nearly empty' with confidence and accuracy.

65. Teaching is very good. The teacher and class assistant have very good questioning skills to encourage children to use correct mathematical language. There are very good opportunities for children to enjoy practical activities; for instance, during snack time, children take turns to complete a tally chart depicting who would like apples and who would like bananas. Children confidently count the numbers on the chart and use the class number line to copy and correctly write numbers such as 17.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. All children attain the expected levels in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are skilled in their use of computers. They move the mouse accurately so that they are able to form pictures correctly or to drag articles of clothing to dress a teddy.
67. Their understanding of time is helped through activities such as growing crocus and hyacinth bulbs. Experiences such as baking Christmas cakes and helping to cook their Christmas lunch help them to understand how materials change. They are developing a good understanding of directions and routes as they experience walks around the village and visit a local farm.
68. Teaching is very good. The teacher and the class assistant devise many exciting experiences to promote children's knowledge and understanding of the world. For instance, the children are currently enjoying learning about polar bears and cold places. They are fascinated by an experiment to see what happens to water when it is placed in the fridge, the freezer and the classroom.

Physical development

69. Children are making good progress in developing physical control, mobility and awareness of space. They all attain the Early Learning Goals in their physical skills by the end of the reception year. The children have regular opportunities to use the nearby hall and field for physical education lessons. In the hall they learn how to negotiate the space successfully and to experiment with different ways of moving to the story 'We're going on a Bear Hunt.' The teacher and the class assistant encourage the children to devise different ways of moving to music to negotiate the various obstacles encountered on the bear hunt. Children move sensibly and with good control, taking care to avoid others.
70. However, the opportunities for children to experience frequent physical activities outdoors is comparatively limited due to the lack of a secure outdoor play area. There are excellent plans to develop the outdoor area.
71. Within the classroom, children develop increasing hand control through gluing, model making with construction toys and practising their handwriting. Most children competently pick up small items of equipment when engaging in play activities and when rolling out play dough and using cutters to make shapes. They make marks with a variety of painting and writing, and by the end of the reception year all use a suitable range of small tools well.

Creative development

72. The children make good progress in developing their creative skills and attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of the reception year. They experiment with texture, colours, shape and form. They have mixed primary colours, built a large-scale model rocket, and, using oil pastels, produced mature and carefully-drawn pictures of fruit. They enjoy the daily art activities such as using 'mixed media' and watercolour painting, quickly learning the correct terminology. One child correctly remembers the name of the artist Richard Paul Lohse, whose work the children have been studying recently.
73. Role-play opportunities are carefully and imaginatively planned and the children enjoy acting out familiar stories, such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' and 'We're going on a Bear Hunt'. The adults are very skilled at knowing the exact time to join in role-play activities and when to leave the children to develop their ideas. As a result the children are very competent at engaging in their own imaginative play.
74. Children sing a variety of nursery rhymes and songs tunefully from memory. In an excellent music lesson the teacher and the class assistant inspired them with their own enthusiasm and love of music. The teacher set the scene by producing a box of percussion instruments, which, she said, was her 'favourite box in the whole school.' The children knew they were in for something special and demonstrated that they had learnt the names of many of the instruments; for example, 'claves,' 'Indian bells' and 'cymbals.' They handle the instruments carefully and sensibly, and respond very well to the teacher's hand directions to play 'quieter and then louder' and 'slowly and then quickly.' The class assistant, who has considerable musical expertise, produces a saxophone, a clarinet, a flute and a bassoon, which she plays for the children, who are enthralled. One higher attaining child recalls that these are 'woodwind' instruments and the lesson ends with an excellent rendition of 'The Bear went Over the Mountain' played by the whole class and accompanied by the bassoon.

ENGLISH

75. In the 2002 national tests for seven year olds, pupils' attainment in reading and writing was above average, and their results were above average in reading and average in writing when compared with those of pupils from similar schools. The very small number of pupils taking the national tests each year makes statistical analysis somewhat unreliable. Despite the difficulty in making comparisons it is clear that standards in reading and writing in national tests since 2000 have been above average.
76. Pupils' attainment in speaking, listening, reading and writing is above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4, and they make good progress. This indicates good improvement since the previous inspection, when attainment in writing at the end of Year 4 was deemed to be below average and pupils made unsatisfactory progress.
77. Standards in speaking and listening are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. The school places considerable emphases on developing speaking and listening skills, and as a result most pupils make good progress. This focus is making a good contribution to improving standards in writing. Many pupils are confident and articulate speakers. Higher attaining pupils speak with confidence, giving reasons for what they are saying. For example, in a Year 2/3 literacy lesson pupils confidently and competently predicted what might happen in a story from looking at the front cover of the text. They discussed their ideas sensibly and maturely with their

'response partners.' The teacher valued their contributions, saying, 'Yours is a good predication. I like that idea.'

78. There are good opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills; for instance, in a 'showing' assembly they confidently and clearly described their out-of-school activities such as football, tennis and dance. The other pupils listened attentively and were totally engrossed in their friends' interests.
79. By the ages of seven and nine, pupils' standards in reading are above the national average and they are making good progress. They read with understanding and can predict with reasonable accuracy 'what will happen next'. They know what authors and illustrators do and identify the main characters and events in their reading books. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 use a variety of strategies to aid the recognition of unfamiliar words, such as letter patterns and sounds, context and pictures. All pupils know the difference between 'fiction' and 'non-fiction', and lower attaining pupils read with suitable expression. Teachers ensure that the pupils receive appropriate and regular support at school, both as individuals and in groups. Pupils take books home from the small school library and many new fiction books have been published. Many of the non-fiction books are old and unappealing, and require replacing.
80. In writing, standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 4, and pupils make good progress. By the age of seven, most can spell simple words accurately and are beginning to spell more complex words phonetically. Effective teaching in phonics in Years 1 and 2 is helping to improve pupils' spelling. The consistency with which phonics is taught in the school is making a good contribution to standards in writing. Most Year 2 pupils can write simple stories using basic punctuation. Higher attaining pupils use question marks and full stops accurately. Descriptive words are used when pupils write their own stories. Some have yet to develop a good idea of structure, with stories having a beginning, middle and end. Work sampling indicates that there are a considerable number of worksheets used in the Year 1/2 class, many of which are not dated or marked, so it is difficult to track progress. Most of the pupils have group targets, but they have not yet learned to use them on an everyday basis to improve their writing. Through well-planned work in the literacy hour they now write for a variety of purposes. Handwriting is usually well formed and legible. Presentation is satisfactory.
81. By the end of Year 4 attainment in writing is above average. Year 3/4 pupils understand how to plan a story and make a good beginning that engages the reader's attention and then builds up interest. All pupils are beginning to understand and use different types of writing; for instance, report writing, adverb poetry, playscripts and book reviews. Higher attaining pupils use paragraphs, correct punctuation, sound grammatical structures and a wide vocabulary to enrich their writing. For instance, when introducing a story set in space, a pupil wrote, "Brrrrr they were off whizzing past blurs of colourful planets, blue moons and black holes. Heading straight for a Super Nova bang! It was so lovely that it took the breath away." There are regular planned opportunities to use these skills in other subjects. Handwriting standards and spelling are good.
82. There was evidence of pupils using their skills in information and communication technology competently in English lessons and when presenting their work. The presentation of written work in the Year 3/4 class is of a very high standard, as the teacher has high expectations and sets the standard with his own neat writing and carefully presented displays of pupils' work.

83. The quality of teaching is good. This is similar to the situation that existed at the time of the last inspection. In the best lessons, teachers share the learning objectives, making sure that pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn; this helps them to concentrate. Pupils know it is their job to listen, learn and ask if they do not understand. Expectations are high and the teacher's enthusiasm, explanations and knowledge of the subject have a very positive effect on pupils' attainment, progress and attitude to the subject. The methods the teachers use mean that the pupils are intellectually active for the whole session. There is no discussion off the subject, and the teacher is careful to maintain the involvement and commitment of the pupils throughout the time available. Homework is used well by staff to support class work.
84. Some of the pupils withdrawn for additional support in literacy are not on the school's register of special educational needs. These pupils require additional support in the literacy hour or in guided reading sessions, not in withdrawal sessions.
85. It is clear that leadership in the subject is good. The co-ordinator, who has only been in post since September, is a leading literacy teacher and has good plans for future developments in English, including useful ways of tracking pupils' progress through the school.

MATHEMATICS

86. At the time of the last inspection attainment was judged to be in line with national expectations across the school. Since 1998 the attainment of pupils in national tests for seven year olds has risen steadily and has been consistently above national expectations. This good progress has been consolidated in Years 3 and 4, and evidence from the current inspection confirms that attainment is now above national expectations throughout the school.
87. In Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of place value and can partition numbers into tens and units. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of numbers to 100 and can apply this knowledge in other areas of the curriculum, including measurement and money. They are developing a range of mental strategies for solving simple number problems and can explain their reasoning.
88. By Year 4, pupils are confidently identifying number sequences and patterns, and using this knowledge to generate hypotheses. For example, they know that $58 - 6 = 52$ and from this deduce the answers for $58 - 16$, $58 - 26$ etc. They work out strategies for checking their answers and understand the concept of an inverse operation. Pupils are beginning to identify which processes to use when solving word problems and to set out their working in an organised and logical fashion.
89. Judgements on the quality of teaching are based on the lessons observed and on the scrutiny of pupils' work. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good throughout the school, and particularly good in the Year 3/4 class. In this class there are regular opportunities for pupils to use and apply their knowledge in a range of different aspects of mathematics, and open-ended problem-solving activities are used effectively as assessment opportunities. Expectations of achievement are high and this is reflected in the excellent way pupils present and organise their work. A good balance in lessons is achieved between structured teaching and opportunities for pupils to work independently and use their initiative to solve problems.
90. Across the school very good relationships, pupil management and behaviour ensure that lessons are calm, purposeful and productive. Pupils work conscientiously on

activities, either independently or collaboratively as required. Information technology is used well to support learning in mathematics, particularly in the Year 2/3 class.

91. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and a higher level of challenge is provided for the older age group in each class. As a result, nearly half the pupils in Year 2 are achieving the higher level in national tests for seven year olds. Good questioning targeted at the different age groups in the class is a feature of most lessons. Classroom assistants provide good support for lower attaining pupils, although more precise use of assessment data is required to ensure that pupils have work, which more accurately reflects their learning needs. In most lessons, support staff are used well, however, in some lessons insufficient consideration is given as to how best to use them to benefit lower attaining pupils.
92. In Years 1 and 2 much of the learning is structured by worksheets from an appropriate commercial scheme. Much of this work was unmarked, although it is discussed with the class teacher. Overall, the marking does not help pupils to understand what they need to do to improve their work and to indicate when, how easily or with what additional support the work was completed. Although there are group targets for mathematics, they are not referred to in teachers' marking and pupils are largely unaware of them, which restricts progress.
93. There is a raft of good assessment procedures in place. For example, pupils complete regular tests on specific areas in mathematics, which provide accurate and precise information. However, the results of assessment are not always used sufficiently to guide planning or the grouping of pupils within the class. This results in work not matching learning requirements in some instances.
94. The co-ordination of mathematics by the headteacher is very good and he sets a good example through the quality of his own teaching. He has monitored teaching in mathematics informally as well as formally as part of the performance management programme. He has overseen the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, which is now firmly established. It has been effective in raising standards of attainment since the last inspection. He is aware of the need to further refine the existing good practice by developing problem-solving activities in Years 1 and 2 and by increasing the range of strategies for improving pupils' mental and oral number skills.

SCIENCE

95. Pupils attain above average standards in science by the age of seven and attain above the expected level by the age of nine. The achievements of virtually all pupils are good. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well in class lessons because their curriculum is carefully tailored to their needs and they are taught well. Year 3/4 pupils who are more able achieve well because teachers have increased the amount of challenging work they are given.
96. By the age of seven, pupils can identify parts of the human body. They can also identify life cycles, tracking changes from egg to hen and from tadpole to frog. Many pupils are developing a scientific vocabulary to plan and explain their work or to predict outcomes. Pupils learn to identify the similarities and differences in the properties of various materials and can use specific vocabulary such as 'edible' and 'pliable.'

97. By the age of nine, pupils carry out a range of experiments, selecting equipment, making observations and recording their findings accurately. Pupils successfully explain their work, showing a good understanding and using the correct scientific language. Higher attaining pupils use scientific words accurately. Pupils can explain what insulators and conductors are when making torches using circuits and switches. They provide knowledgeable answers to the questions their teacher poses. Pupils can state that if there is a break in a circuit electricity will not flow.
98. Pupils have access to books of good quality and other research sources such as CD-ROMs and the Internet, and are beginning to make good use of them. Year 3/4 pupils record their observations, measurements and findings neatly and accurately. Their understanding of science is improved by an organised residential visit.
99. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are planned well, with teachers making good use of practical activities. Teachers are careful to emphasise the correct scientific terminology and this helps pupils to a greater understanding. Teachers have good subject knowledge and provide clear instructions and helpful, lively demonstrations of concepts. They provide much well-directed help and support. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Pupils show considerable interest in science, having consistently good attitudes, and this helps them learn more quickly. Teachers are enthusiastic and pupils respond to their eagerness. As a result they work hard, concentrate well and are keen to find answers to the problems set. Pupils' behaviour is consistently very good. They work well with other pupils in carrying out activities and are aware of safety procedures.
100. The science curriculum is broad and balanced. It is based entirely on the good model produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils' written work in science helps them raise their standards of literacy and handwriting. Counting and measuring activities, in various aspects of the subject, help improve standards of numeracy. Teachers have not used information and communication technology enough in the past to improve pupils' scientific experiences, mainly due to a lack of sufficient computers. However, as this situation has been addressed recently, information and communication technology features increasingly in lessons.
101. The quality of leadership in science is good, being informed, innovative and enthusiastic. The co-ordinator monitors and evaluates work throughout the school and has organised resources well. Teachers have been given thorough guidance on how to promote the skills needed for scientific enquiry via in-service education and training. As a result, the school has effective strategies in place to raise standards further in science.

ART AND DESIGN

102. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4, pupils achieve the expected standards for their age. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when standards were judged to be below average and pupils made unsatisfactory progress. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress in developing their skills and understanding in art and design. There has been good progress made in learning about the styles and techniques of well-known artists. For instance, pupils in the Year 2/3 class enjoyed looking at the work of various artists whose work they copy in their sketch books, clearly saying why they like the work of a particular artist. Good progress has also been made in pupils' understanding of different materials and

the techniques used to create different effects. For instance, Year 3/4 pupils have used acrylic paints to produce colourful pictures of the planets.

103. During the inspection, Year 2/3 pupils collaborated well in small groups to observe and sketch small sculptures. The teacher showed the pupils a variety of different sculptures before setting them the challenge of sketching the objects using a range of media. In the small number of lessons, seen the quality of teaching was good. Observational drawing skills are about average and there are displays of work in all year groups. Watercolours and wax crayons are used to good effect to depict line and tone. Higher attaining pupils are particularly skilled at using shading well to depict the play of light on different surfaces. For instance, Year 3/4 pupils have produced some intricate observational sketches of seashells. All pupils use sketchbooks to practise and develop their ideas. There is scope for pupils to produce more three-dimensional artwork.
104. The co-ordinator, who has only been in post for a term, is enthusiastic and working hard to improve standards in art even further in the school. She provides good leadership. The policy and scheme of work have been updated in line with the new curriculum. The co-ordinator intends to monitor pupils' work in their sketchbooks and displays. She has clear plans for future developments. Information and communication technology is used well in art lessons. Pupils skilfully use programs such as 'Dazzle' to produce colourful pictures.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. Attainment in design and technology has improved since the last inspection and is now in line with national expectations across the school. Pupils are now given appropriate opportunities to design, make and evaluate in all classes.
106. In Year 2/3, pupils look at packaging, disassemble different kinds of containers and evaluate them in terms of purpose. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 look at the design and construction of torches and link this to work in science on electricity. Food technology is covered from the reception class onwards, and pupils have enjoyed designing and making a variety of recipes. For example, the youngest children make bread and cakes, and pupils in Years 2 and 3 design and make sandwiches.
107. Only one lesson in design and technology was observed during the inspection; pupils made good progress in making three-dimensional sweet containers. The teacher skilfully extended pupils' learning by asking them to use a computer program to design an attractive cover for their sweet container. There was a design focus in an excellent science lesson observed in the Year 3/4 class. Pupils had designed torches and were modifying their designs in the light of work on circuits and switches in science.
108. The new co-ordinator is aware of the need to update the existing policy and to evaluate the scheme of work, which is based on national guidelines.

GEOGRAPHY

109. At the time of the last inspection attainment was broadly in line with national expectations. Evidence from the current inspection suggests a similar picture, although, by Year 4, pupils' geographical skills and knowledge are above those expected nationally.

110. In Year 2, pupils use aerial photographs and large-scale maps to denote key features of the village and surrounding area. Pupils looking at an Ordnance Survey map of the area on a computer and can identify the main buildings of the village.
111. Pupils in Year 4 can compare and contrast life in their own village with village life in India. Very good questioning from their teacher ensures a rigorous degree of analysis and pupils are then able to write a postcard to an Indian child giving precise and detailed information about their local area. Pupils make good use of information technology to research topics. Many pupils have an impressive knowledge and understanding of world geography and can locate different countries and oceans on a world map.
112. The teaching of geography is good and often very good. Teachers strike an effective balance between structured teaching of essential facts and opportunities for pupils to research independently. Factual knowledge and geographical skills are built on sequentially. For example, what pupils have learned about their own locality in Years 2 and 3, forms the basis for comparing and contrasting communities in Year 4.
113. Field trips to Charmouth, Dunster and Glastonbury provide a focus for detailed studies of particular geographical features. Good cross-curricular links are made with history and science topics. Good opportunities are provided for extended writing.
114. Planning is based on national guidelines, but these are adapted in order to create a relevant and coherent scheme of work reflecting the particular circumstances of the school. Resources are good and are used well.

HISTORY

115. Attainment in history is in line with expectations at the age of seven, and above expectations at the age of nine. All pupils achieve well. Only a small number of lessons were seen. Other evidence includes an analysis of pupils' work and discussions with them, their teachers and the subject co-ordinator. The historical skills of pupils in Years 3/4 are improving rapidly and they are gaining a good understanding of historical interpretation and enquiry.
116. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 satisfactorily develop a sense of chronology. For example, they have looked at toys that they, their parents and their grandparents have used, and compared them in simple terms. They are beginning to understand the importance and reliability of evidence when studying an event and are beginning to understand the difference between second-hand and eyewitness accounts; for instance, during the Great Fire of London. They also acquire an understanding of how famous people from the past have changed things, by studying historical figures such as Guy Fawkes.
117. Year 3/4 pupils have a good understanding and knowledge of the Viking period they are currently studying. For instance, they show good factual knowledge of Viking gods and myths. They have a real enthusiasm for this subject and can place various invaders correctly on a time line. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the reliability that can be ascribed to different types of evidence.
118. In the lessons observed the quality of teaching is good. This is the main factor in improved standards. Lessons are planned well to meet the needs of the pupils and hold their interest, ensuring that they are attentive and kept on task. Effective pace is maintained through a range of activities and this, together with the pupils' very good attitudes, results in good progress. The class assistant provides good support in

Year 3/4 history lessons as she assists pupils to search the Internet to provide additional information about the Vikings.

119. The leadership in history to date has been good and is one of the reasons why the provision and standards have improved. Structured guidance is offered within a rolling programme by way of topic resources to ensure the step-by-step development of skills. The policy is up to date and the assessment system ensures that the progress of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills is being recorded appropriately.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

120. At the time of the last report, attainment in information technology was below national expectations, except in keyboard skills, and progress was unsatisfactory across the school. Evidence from the current inspection indicates that attainment is now in line with national expectations and pupils are making good progress. The scheme of work is based on national guidelines, and all strands of the curriculum are being covered in each year group. The strength of the provision is that information technology is not taught as an isolated skill but is being used to support learning in most areas of the curriculum.
121. The school has the use of laptop computers for short periods of time throughout the year and has up-to-date computers in all classrooms. This enables specific skills to be taught on a whole-class or small-group basis. The school wisely proposes to extend this provision, possibly by renting laptops and purchasing an interactive white board so that the co-ordinator can undertake specialist teaching across the school. The quality of teaching in information technology is good overall and most, but not all, teachers and support staff having undergone training and are confident in their support of pupils' learning. The best and most systematic teaching of information technology are in the co-ordinator's own class.
122. In Year 2, pupils have satisfactory word-processing skills and are beginning to gain more confidence in using the range of tools available. For example, they are beginning to rearrange text using the 'cut', 'paste', 'select' and 'copy' tools. By Year 3, pupils can change the colour, size and type of font. They can insert pictures into the text by highlighting, selecting and framing and can then save their work.
123. Pupils in Year 2 use a programmable toy to support work in mathematics. There were good examples of pupils using data-handling programmes such as 'flexitree' and 'junior pinpoint' to support graph work in mathematics. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use the Internet to research topics in history and geography, which raises attainment and accelerates progress.
124. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She provides good support for colleagues and is aware of the need for further development of the subject. Assessment booklets are currently being trialled and are proving to be a useful record of coverage, although there is not enough detail about how and when targets are achieved.

MUSIC

125. Pupils' attainment in music across the school remains in line with national expectations. In Years 2 and 3, pupils understand that sounds can be created in different ways and from a variety of sources. They use their voices, body percussion

- and untuned percussion instruments to create a 'weather' composition of rain, wind and thunder. They are beginning to understand the concepts of dynamics, tempo and timbre but are not yet using the correct musical vocabulary. They choose and order the sounds but are not yet structuring them into a musical form.
126. By Year 4, pupils understand how music can be used to represent different ideas or creatures. They listen carefully to a range of 'animal' music, from 'The Jungle Book' to Saint-Saëns' 'Carnival of the Animals'. They can identify which instruments are used to portray the animals and suggest how rhythm and tempo help create a musical picture. In assembly, pupils sing tunefully and with enthusiasm.
127. The quality of teaching in music is satisfactory in Years 1 to 4, but the very good skills teaching in the reception class is not sufficiently developed. In the Year 2/3 class good opportunities are provided for pupils to use untuned instruments, but appropriate musical terms are not sufficiently explained or used by the pupils. In the Year 3/4 class, pupils respond well to opportunities to listen to music but are not given the chance to use what they have learned in their own composition. Although the activities in lessons are interesting in themselves, the development of musical skills is unsystematic across the school.
128. The recently appointed music co-ordinator is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and aware of the need to raise the profile of music in the school. The existing planning is based on national guidelines but has yet to be fully adapted to meet the needs of the school. The curriculum is supplemented by opportunities for Year 4 pupils to join the middle school choir and by peripatetic teaching in the violin, clarinet and guitar. Public musical drama productions are an important part of the school's role in the community.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Standards in physical education are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils have good games skills. This is a similar picture to that found at the time of the previous inspection. There is no difference in standards between boys and girls.
130. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 work enthusiastically in a gymnastic lesson. They make good progress in performing turning jumps and stomach rolls. Good use is made of pupil demonstrators to improve performance. Pupils handle large mats carefully and work well in small groups, taking turns sensibly in the confined space of the village hall.
131. Teaching and learning are good in the Year 3/4 class. Pupils make good progress. By skilfully using demonstrators and structuring the lesson so that pupils faced increased challenges, the teacher ensured that all pupils made good progress. There was a good range of warm-up activities, which included stretching, jogging and running, and pupils realise that exercise makes them breathe more quickly and also increases their heartbeat.
132. Pupils understand that physical exercise is an important part of a healthy lifestyle. A Year 2 pupil said, 'Exercise warms your body up and then your heart beats faster.' The enthusiastic, fit and knowledgeable co-ordinator leads the subject well. There are after-school physical education clubs, which make an important contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

133. Only two lessons in religious education were observed during the inspection and there was too little evidence in the scrutiny of work to make a judgement on standards. Planning is based on the locally agreed syllabus and elements from national guidelines. Considerable use is made of Bible stories as a basis for exploring moral and social themes. For example, pupils in the Year 1/2 class looked at how Jesus gathered his disciples together and related this to their own reasons for making special friends. In the Year 2/3 class pupils looked at the story of Noah as an example of how we should put our trust in God, and pupils in Year 3 look at the importance of their home in the light of the story of 'The Prodigal Son'.
134. Knowledge and understanding of other world religions are developed through looking at symbols and ceremonies in different contexts. For example, the children compare a Hindu wedding with the Christian ceremony. The teaching of religious education was broadly satisfactory in the two lessons observed. Teachers have good subject knowledge and involve pupils in discussion through good questioning. However, follow-up activities are mainly based on drawing and lack challenge. Opportunities are missed for pupils to explore ideas in greater depth.
135. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and able to support colleagues in teaching about religions other than Christianity. Resources are good, and appropriate use is made of the county resource centre