

INSPECTION REPORT

EASTOVER COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bridgwater

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123679

Headteacher: Mustafa Shaikh

Reporting inspector: Geoff Burgess
OIN: 23708

Dates of inspection: 4th to 7th November 2001

Inspection number: 248486

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Wellington Road
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Ken Hocking

Date of previous inspection: October 1997

Information about the inspection team

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Eastover Primary School serves a wide spectrum of families of almost entirely British heritage most of whom come from the streets surrounding the school in the old part of the town. Take up of free school meals is low but, with no hot meals provided, this is not entirely representative of the number who are entitled to claim. The school is popular in the area and the number of pupils on roll has remained stable at about 410-420 for several years. Movement of pupils in or out of school other than at usual times is less than in most schools. Less than a fifth of pupils are on the special needs register with none having statements of special need. This is a relatively low figure. Attainment on entry is below that found in most schools especially in expressive language and mathematical development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a much improved, satisfactory school, well led and managed, where satisfactory provision including good teaching is enabling pupils to make overall satisfactory progress. With its below average intake and average funding it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Good and very good literacy and numeracy teaching ensures that most pupils are achieving well in the basics
- It is making very good provision for its youngest boys and girls in their foundation year
- Pupils' personal, moral and social development has a high priority. They enjoy school, behave well, undertake all their responsibilities conscientiously and get on well together
- Staff work hard to ensure that boys and girls are safe and happy and able to do their best
- It is building up a good relationship with parents and the local community
- Very good leadership by the head is helping governors and staff to develop their leadership and management roles and make a good contribution to improvements in provision and strategic planning

What could be improved

- Pupils identified as needing extra help are not making sufficient progress and miss out on good teaching in literacy and other subjects
- Assessment procedures do not provide sufficient, good enough information for teachers and managers to use
- While the full curriculum is covered, the depth and quality of this coverage is inconsistent across classes and subjects

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Little changed in the years after the last inspection but the past two years have seen substantial improvements to many aspects of the school's provision. Long standing issues, some remaining from the last inspection, have been addressed; roles, responsibilities and management structures have been clarified, safety and security issues have been resolved, the foundation stage has been transformed and new teachers have brought fresh energy and new ideas to the teaching team. This has yet to come to fruition in improved results in national testing but achievement is growing through the school. Overall improvement is good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	D	C	D
mathematics	B	D	C	D
science	D	E	D	D

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

When viewed over the longer term, results in national testing have been around the average for all schools and have improved at the same rate. However, two particularly strong year groups in 1999 and 2000 did rather better than this, other than in science, and in the following year a much weaker group did much less well. Preliminary results for 2002 show that standards are once again around average and on an improving trend. Test results for seven-year-olds have been close to the average or a little below until this year when they fell significantly. Children in the reception classes are making good progress from a low base but many will not achieve all the early learning goals by the time they move into Year 1. Achievement in the core subjects is good in years one to five but Year 6 are making slower progress than that made by eleven-year-olds in most schools. Boys and girls receiving extra help, mainly with their literacy skills, are not keeping pace with their classmates. Pupils are currently working at below average levels in literacy and science in years two and six and mathematics in year six with average attainment in mathematics in year two. Standards in most other subjects are broadly similar to those in the core subjects except in physical education generally and information technology in Key Stage 1 where they are better.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Boys and girls enjoy their time in school and are usually keen to join in with all the school has to offer. Within the limits of their abilities, they do their best to please and make whatever contribution they can to discussions and shared activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in class and around the school is almost always good, sometimes very good but occasionally, thoughtless behaviour by individuals or small groups wastes time in lessons. Lunchtimes and playtimes are sociable, happy occasions. Boys and girls are very friendly, polite and helpful.
Personal development and relationships	The school works hard to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own actions and be responsible members of the school community. They very happily and proudly carry out any tasks they are asked to do around the school. Older pupils take good care of their younger schoolmates, relationships are good and visitors are made extremely welcome. Boy's and girl's personal development is good.
Attendance	The great majority of pupils come to school regularly and arrive at school in good time. A few sometimes miss school without good cause.

Almost all children do their best in class and around the school to make it a good place for them to live and learn. Adults and pupils make light of the difficulties presented by the accommodation and little time is lost in sorting out problems or moving around.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Lessons seen overall	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.

The majority of lessons are at least good with about a fifth even better and a small number unsatisfactory. A half of lessons in the foundation stage are very good and excellent but no lessons in years one and six fall into these categories. The strongest subjects are literacy and numeracy with more than three-quarters of lessons good and better while in science and the non-core subjects taken together, half are good and very good. Most of the rest are satisfactory with three unsatisfactory lessons in the non-core subjects. It is very encouraging for the school to note that every new teacher appointed in the past two years achieved at least one very good lesson and several did even better. In almost every class, learning is enhanced by pupils good attitudes, behaviour and work habits. Less successful lessons are associated with work not being well enough matched to pupils' interests and abilities and some ensuing class management problems.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a suitable range of learning opportunities for most of its pupils with literacy and numeracy strongly represented. Provision in information technology is growing term by term but art, religious education and, in some classes, music, are less well developed. Pupils in their first year in school are enjoying a rich selection of well planned activities. A good range of extra activities enrich normal school work and personal, social and health education is gaining importance. However, several pupils taken out of lessons, mainly for help with their reading and writing or social development, unnecessarily miss out on sharing in important aspects of literacy and other subjects with their classmates.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Basic procedures for identifying need, setting targets and monitoring progress are in place but these and the arrangements made to deal with pupils' needs are not working well enough. Learning targets are not specific to the current needs of individual pupils and are not reviewed and updated regularly enough. The work provided is often not planned to complement and support what they are doing in other lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Staff make good provision for promoting pupils' personal development especially in the development of pupils' social skills and attitudes and moral awareness. Curricular provision for pupils to study and appreciate their own cultural heritage and celebrate the cultural diversity of others is sound with satisfactory attention given to helping pupils to reflect on the more spiritual aspects of their growth.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers and other staff know the children well and take good care for their safety and well-being. Formal procedures for these aspects have improved greatly in recent years and are now good. Behaviour is monitored carefully and high standards are actively promoted. Current assessment arrangements are not sufficiently detailed or rigorous for teachers to keep an eye on academic progress, identify individual needs or to guide planning. Personal development is monitored informally but, apart from pupils who give cause for concern, few records are kept.

The head has made it a priority to build a stronger partnership with parents and this is very much appreciated. General communications are much improved but school reports do not clearly indicate just how well pupils are doing in relation to other pupils of the same age. The new parent - teacher association is making a very good contribution to the life of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Before the present head took over, little was expected of senior managers and subject coordinators in planning for and managing whole school improvement. By default, little changed and the head inherited a very large agenda of necessary developments with few existing staff having had the opportunity to develop their management skills. It has taken great determination on his part, a lot of hard work by everyone and a very clear view of what is necessary and important to make the very many improvements to provision and resources which have been achieved. Most remaining managers have followed his lead with great loyalty and dedication and new staff are making a very good contribution in their

	areas of responsibility. Overall leadership and management are good but the head's contribution has been very good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The current governing body is providing good support to the head in making the most of the school's resources. Most are relatively new to the role but they have shown admirable commitment in accepting their roles and responsibilities with some enthusiasm. Previous arrangements did not provide them with the information and procedures necessary to fully understand what needed to be done. The new head and chairman are helping them to come to terms with the reality of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and what is required of them as strategic planners and critical friends.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Arrangements for identifying priorities for development are much improved and the consequent school improvement plans provide an appropriate agenda for focusing the efforts of the school. The head has introduced classroom monitoring as part of the school's performance management procedures but this does not currently allow for subject managers to evaluate teaching in 'their' subjects. Some analysis of national test data and the results of standardised tests has taken place but current assessment procedures are not good enough to provide the kind of information needed for the more detailed analysis of trends or to set challenging but achievable whole school targets.
The strategic use of resources	By exploiting all the possible extra funding opportunities, the head and governors have made it possible for several major improvements to be made to the school's accommodation and resources. New teaching appointments have greatly improved the range of subject and phase expertise among the staff and there is scope to make more use of this by swapping classes. Although there are very good examples of classroom assistants being well deployed, in most cases better use could be made of support teachers and other support staff.

The head, very well supported by the chair of governors, deserves great credit for giving the school a much needed sense of direction and for prompting and supporting senior staff and other governors in beginning to take real responsibility for professional, personal and academic standards throughout the whole school community. A major corner has been turned and the school is now in a much better position than it has been for many years.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children enjoy going to school • teaching is good • the school is helping pupils to grow up sensibly and behaviour is good • pupils are expected to work hard and do their best and they make good progress • the staff are very approachable • the school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information about how well their children are doing • the work children are expected to do at home • the range of extra activities the school provides

Inspectors agree with parent's positive views and that improvements could be made to children's reports but judge that homework and extra-curricular activities are as good as in most schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Although the uptake of packed lunches provided by the school without charge is low, with the inspection early in the school year, inspectors were able to see for themselves that the attainment of boys and girls when they start school is below average with several children well below. This is reflected in the initial assessments undertaken by the school in the past half-term. The results of national tests in Year 2 have been consistently round about the average in reading, writing and mathematics until this year when results for a year group which had more pupils with special needs than usual and which had had a difficult first year in school dipped below average. School records show that only a very low six pupils out of 59 had moved onto the National Curriculum in English by the end of their first year in school and only one in mathematics. This should have meant that no pupils from this group would achieve Level 3 in national tests for seven-year-olds when in fact nearly a quarter did so in reading and mathematics. With similar gains across the attainment spectrum, this actually indicates consistently good progress in Years 1 and 2.

2. Results in Year 6 have been very erratic, with average results in English and mathematics in 1997 and 1998, significantly better, above and well above average results in 1999 and 2000, below average in 2001 and average again in 2002. Science results have generally followed the pattern but have been lower. The school has little verifiable specific information to explain the two very good years. In the past two years available information indicates that the two year groups made much less progress in English, mathematics and science since their Year 2 national assessments than is the case in other schools which obtained the same overall results for seven-year-olds.

3. Writing has been relatively weaker in tests in both years two and six. It is particularly significant that although an average percentage of pupils achieved the expected Level 4 in the 2002 national tests in English, mathematics and science, the percentage of pupils achieving higher grades was well below average in English and science and below in mathematics. It is worth noting that several pupils in the present Years 3 and 4 shown by tests to be working at least one level below that expected have not been included in the support provided for those with special needs.

4. Current standards in Year 2 are average in mathematics, a little below in reading and science, but definitely below in writing. With continued good teaching and given the school's past good record in this area, seven-year-old pupils may well achieve average levels in reading and science in next years national tests. The present year six are operating at below average levels in reading, mathematics and science and well below the ever-improving standards now expected of eleven-year-olds in writing. Overall less effective teaching than is usually seen is meaning that most pupils in Year 6 are not making the pickup in standards common in most schools and with limited focus on their particular needs, higher and lower attainers are not catching up or surging ahead respectively. Current planning arrangements for science where topics taught in younger classes are not revisited in Years 5 and 6 mean that in those topics, pupils do not have the opportunity to work at the levels expected in national testing. Consequently, by the time they get to Year 6, while attainment in topics more recently covered is sound, pupils' standards in other topics are low.

5. An influx of new, young teachers has brought new energy and enthusiasm to the teaching force and with the good contribution of remaining staff, overall achievement is good throughout the rest of the school. This is particularly the case in the Foundation stage where, despite boys and girls only just moving on to a full day in school, the progress they are making across the range of their curriculum is impressive. However, absolute standards are still below average in all areas of learning except aspects of their personal development. Pupils are achieving well in reading and mathematics in Years 1 to 5 and in some classes in writing where it has a particular focus but this is not consistent across the school. Achievement in science is not as good despite some good and very good teaching mainly because the national framework used has not been adequately expanded and enhanced to provide a fully formed scheme of work for teachers to use.

6. The new computer suite is making it possible for most pupils to make good progress in

catching up on ever improving standards in the subject especially in the younger classes where they are now matching national expectations. However, pupils in Key Stage 2 who have not been able to work in a concentrated way with well trained staff using up to date technology until recently, still have some way to go. Overall standards in most other subjects are below expectations for the ages of the pupils concerned but in several classes where teachers have particular expertise in a subject, pupils are achieving well in that subject. Music is a good example. Standards in art and religious education are limited by the lack of adequate support materials and expertise among the staff. The exception is physical education where, despite the limitations of the accommodation and the lack of a playing field, standards are sound and sometimes better throughout the school.

7. Many pupils who find learning difficult and those who are withdrawn from lessons to support their emotional needs often make slower progress than their peers because arrangements made to deal with their needs are not working well enough. Pupils withdrawn for a whole literacy session miss valuable introduction and shared text sessions and this inhibits their awareness of the rich variety of texts that they can aspire to be able to read. In their withdrawn lessons they are provided with mundane tasks and uninspiring texts. Targets in individual education plans are too broad and not specific enough to measure success and are not reviewed and updated regularly enough for pupils to experience success or to ensure that they are making sufficient progress in their learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils display good attitudes towards learning and towards their school in particular. Boys and girls enjoy being in school and are usually keen to join in all it has to offer. They are proud of their school, fond of their teachers and helpers and growing in self-esteem. Almost all children do their best in class and around the school to make it a good place for them to live and learn. They move sensibly around the difficult accommodation and are quick to help adults and other children when doing so, for instance by holding doors open. Pupils understand they have to tidy up when an activity is finished and generally do it quickly and sensibly. The youngest pupils, some of whom were having their first full-time days in school, move confidently around their classrooms, find what they need to do their work and try their best at all times. The inspection team talked to a sample of pupils from all age groups during the inspection. Generally they felt that playtimes were now more fun and that behaviour had improved: some were still a little frightened by the rougher behaviour of some children. All were confident that the adults on the playground could be approached for help. They understood the rewards system and were very proud of the certificates and stickers they had achieved. Attendance is satisfactory. The great majority of pupils come to school regularly and arrive on time but a few miss school without good cause.

9. Behaviour in class and around the school has improved markedly over the last two years and is now good. Lunchtimes and playtimes are sociable, happy occasions. Boys and girls are very friendly, polite and helpful. Behaviour in class is often very good with teachers able to fully concentrate on supporting learning and usually good with any small difficulties easily resolved. However, occasional less satisfactory behaviour in class is associated with work not being well enough matched to pupils' interests and abilities and some class management problems. The headteacher's behaviour records show that the number of reported incidents of poor behaviour in and out of class has dropped steeply over the last two years, and that the numbers of those sent to him for praise or reward has risen steadily. The only significant problems recently have been in relation to pupils who have been previously excluded by other schools.

10. Pupils' personal development is good overall. They very happily and proudly carry out any tasks they are asked to do around the school. Most pupils concentrate well and work together in pairs or groups sensibly. Older pupils take good care of their younger schoolmates, both formally through the peer mediation scheme, and more informally through shared games and activities. Relationships between pupils are often very supportive, particularly in classes where teachers model caring, considerate behaviour. A girl in the reception class looked round at her classmates at the play dough table, told them all to hold out their arms, and went round and carefully rolled everybody's sleeves up. Similarly, a pupil in Year 5, realising that a classmate was feeling unwell, helped him with his work and insisted on fetching him the necessary resources. In both cases this was without prompting by the class teacher concerned.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11. With almost two-thirds of lessons good and better and just three unsatisfactory lessons, teaching overall is good. Very good teaching was observed in nearly a quarter of lessons. This involved 10 out of 14 classes, all year groups except years one and six and all subjects except geography and design technology where only two lessons per subject were observed. The strongest teaching was observed in the Foundation stage where, with half the lessons very good and excellent, teaching is very good, and in literacy and numeracy lessons in the rest of the school with nearly three fifths good, a further one fifth very good and the rest satisfactory. An important factor in this has been a series of good appointments to the staff, some just weeks before the inspection and several in their first teaching post. All achieved at least one very good lesson and most achieved even more.

12. Almost all teaching in the foundation stage is at least good with a half very good and excellent. The teachers have created a well-organised and structured environment and built up well-established ways of working and expectations among the children. For their part, the children are remarkably self-contained and amenable given the low level of personal, social and language skills with which they enter the school. This is a great help to the child and also to the adults involved as it means that they are able to work with targeted groups secure in the knowledge that boys and girls working on their own will be able to get on happily with minimal need for help. Learning support assistants (LSA) and other helpers make a very good contribution to children's learning working alongside the teachers. A good example of this came when a LSA took a group of boys and girls across to the new design technology room to make hot dogs for the rest of the class as part of the Carnival preparations.

13. Several examples of very good teaching in most aspects of boy's and girl's development are noted in the Foundation Stage section later in this report but one lesson on November 5th was judged to be excellent. In this the teacher picked up the fireworks theme and used this to encourage children with limited speaking skills to experiment with sounds and body movements to imitate fireworks. She then used expressive vocabulary such as 'whizzing', 'crackling' to help them describe the noises they had been making. In the very well organised and structured choosing and focus group session that followed, a smiling parent shared books with 'readers', the LSA worked with a group practising writing their names while the teacher gave each child intense moments of quality attention in which they visibly flowered. For the lowest attaining group this coincided, to their great delight, with their first recognisable attempt at writing their own names.

14. Two very good lessons in Year 2 showed the very good implementation of the numeracy strategy and the impact that a visiting expert, role-play and the opportunity to handle real objects can have on engaging young children in thinking about history. In the maths lesson, the teacher ensured that her pupils knew exactly what they were going to learn about and then made good use of an overhead projector, a ball and a tambourine as ways of stimulating responses and attention. By making the main activity an open ended task ie using three numbers from a selection to add up to seven, for instance, she was able to stretch the activity to match the needs of all pupils as understanding developed. Very good use of classroom support made a strong contribution to learning. Year 2's were enthralled by the stimulating and very appropriate input provided by their visitor from 1666 (via the local museum). Using vivid descriptions and relating the Great Fire of London to pupils' own experiences and feelings, he drew out real empathy and understanding. The use of 'real' objects from the time gave them the opportunity to ask the 'obvious' questions which helped them to gain real knowledge about then and the difference with now. For instance, a child noticing that a coin did not have a monarch's head on it resulted in a discussion about Cromwell. Talk about the square wooden plate came round to the idea of a square meal.

15. With a quarter of lessons in Key Stage 2 very good, most teachers taught at least one. These included two very good parallel science lessons in Year 5 where in both classes, very well planned and prepared activities gave pupils every chance to use first hand experience to learn about the relationship between vibration and sound. Despite many pupils having limited language skills, all were so engaged that they happily discussed, commented on and recorded at their own planned level what

they had found out. Very good questioning and prompting helped pupils to draw conclusions such as, 'the rice on the drum doesn't vibrate, the drumskin does'. Even the return of a group of lower achievers from literacy support did not detract from the pace of learning.

16. In very good literacy and numeracy lessons in Year 3, the young teacher made very good use of the structures and planning of the two strategies to pitch the work at a challenging level. By keeping detailed records of her pupils' achievements, she is able to provide a full range of activities in each subject matched to their needs and interests. For instance, guided reading operates at four levels and involves real books for all those for whom the teacher is responsible. Planning sheets for adult helpers mean they can make a very positive contribution and well established routines and firm, sensible class management means a lively class are able to concentrate and work together in a relaxed but purposeful atmosphere.

17. An encouraging feature of very good teaching was the fact that several very good lessons were taught by members of staff responsible for subjects involved. The information technology (IT) coordinator made very good use of the new computer suite and interactive white board to help her class to explore an art based website and research Van Gogh. By arranging for poor readers to work with good readers, she ensured that all pupils could access all information and IT high fliers were asked to use a word processing programme to note their findings. Every child worked solidly for the entire lesson and when the teacher brought the class together to share their findings, the gains in art knowledge and IT skills was plain to see. The new physical education coordinator showed his understanding of the subject and the quality of his planning and preparation in a session which combined work on the effect of exercise on the body with work on passing and receiving skills using hockey sticks. In the small number of unsatisfactory lessons, teachers' lack of subject expertise and in two cases, the lack of adequate schemes of work, meant that activities did not match pupils' capacity or interests. This brought about a loss of concentration and minor misbehaviour and learning suffered.

18. Music has been a problem area for the school and the impact of having a subject specialist as coordinator was seen in a Year 4 lesson. Starting with a warm up including an African call and response song, the teacher introduced the learning objectives to improve pupils' control of pulse and rhythm. Most pupils clearly remembered what they had learned about 'beat' and the rhythm compositions they had made the previous lesson. A recorded 'rap' track thoroughly engaged the class who quickly picked up the rhythm using body percussion and then made good attempts at the very challenging task of making up their own 'Clean School' song. With low confidence and standards across most of the school, the impact of half a term's high quality teaching was obvious.

19. Extra support for those pupils who find aspects of literacy difficult is mainly in the form of small groups working away from the classroom. Whilst the teaching is generally sound and focused on what is identified on the pupil's individual education plan, they often miss some very good input from their own teachers. In a science lesson in Year 5, six pupils returning from such support needed to have special input from the teacher who repeated the experiment with them while the rest of the class got on quietly with their work. Individuals taken out of lessons such as music for counselling miss valuable time to make progress in their knowledge and understanding of music. Most class teachers know their pupils well and plan suitable activities to meet the needs of the different ability groups within their class. Pupils in Year 6 are split into two distinct ability groups for literacy and numeracy but there is little differentiation of work within those groups. Support staff are used effectively to support the needs of individuals in most classrooms, particularly in literacy lessons. Teachers meet with the special needs coordinator to discuss the needs of individual pupils and to review the targets. However, they are not responsible for the targets for the boys and girls in their class and so the plans are not used consistently by all teachers when preparing lessons. Targets in group education plans are too vague and do not meet the needs of individual pupils.

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

20. Learning opportunities provided by the school are satisfactory in that they broadly cover all that is required and meet statutory requirements. The youngest children are provided with an active curriculum well matched to their needs and the requirements of the foundation stage. However, the depth and quality of coverage is inconsistent across classes and subjects outside this stage and

literacy and numeracy, where effective strategies are in place for ensuring that the basic skills are taught coherently and progressively.

21. Curriculum initiatives and developments involve staff and governors and the school development plan identifies priorities and resource needs. The school makes good use of the model plans made available by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and these are widely used as termly plans. Planning has been developed to enable teachers to identify specific learning objectives in lessons, which they now do very effectively. The role of subject co-ordinators is well defined and provides a structure and framework for self-evaluation. However, due to the number of recent staff changes not all subjects are covered effectively and some pupils are not receiving their entitlement to the full programmes of study in all areas of the curriculum. Art, science and religious education are especially affected but provision in several other areas such as design technology, music and physical education is, as yet, not consistent across the school. Religious Education is taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus, "Awareness, Mystery and Value". Although the topics meet the requirements of the agreed syllabus the school needs to ensure that all aspects of each topic has a religious focus. Drugs education and sex and relationship education are co-ordinated within the programme for personal, social and health education. Sex education plans include curriculum activity from the reception year to Year 6 where it is supported by visits from the school nurse.

22. The curriculum meets the needs of most pupils and overall provides equality of access and opportunity. Eastover School has a strong commitment to racial equality and has taken part in national initiatives such as "Kick racism out of football". Racial equality policies work alongside the school's behaviour and anti-bullying policy. The school is accredited as a Health Promoting School and has focused on playground and play initiatives. Older pupils trained as playground mediators help and support younger pupils with play activities and the development of social skills.

23. Provision for pupils identified with learning, behaviour or social difficulties is not good enough. Although the school has made some progress, too many pupils are withdrawn unnecessarily from lessons for individual or small group work that is not directly related to the work they are missing in class. Pupils often miss one whole literacy session each week, which makes it difficult for them to take part in the other lessons when they are not withdrawn. The provision is not planned carefully enough to ensure that pupils can still experience all subjects to which they are entitled. A few are withdrawn for individual sessions with a trained counsellor. While these sessions can be valuable at specific times in pupils' lives, they do not have a specific focus relating to the recorded needs of the pupil nor are they adequately monitored for their impact or value for money.

24. A good range of extracurricular activities in and out of school enriches normal school work. During the last year clubs have included soccer, rounders, table tennis, cricket, ball skills, athletics, netball, chess, gardening, crafts, maths, science, cookery, and dance. This term a choir and a recorder club have been established. Older pupils said without prompting that they really enjoyed the clubs organised for them however younger pupils have few opportunities in this area. They can also learn to play various musical instruments through the county music service. Different year groups have had historical workshops on the Tudors, the Greeks and the Egyptians. Reception pupils went to the Tropiquaria Centre near Watchet. Year 1 visited Cricket St Thomas Wildlife Park. Year 2 went to the Glastonbury Rural Life Museum and the Wookey Hole caves. Both year groups attended a drama workshop run by the cast of Bridgwater Arts Centre's Christmas production and then watched the show. Year 3 learnt about the Romans at Caerleon. Year 4 re-enacted the evacuation of children in World War 2, dressed in appropriate clothing. Year 5 have a residential trip to an outdoor centre, near Taunton and Year 6 go to Osmington Bay in Dorset. During a very successful 'Health Week', visitors included representatives of the emergency services.

25. The community makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Many former pupils are now parents and grandparents of current ones, and still live locally (at least one pupil knew that his great-grandfather had attended the school). They attend school events whenever possible and willingly support fundraising efforts. Grandparents and other residents have visited to talk about their experiences in World War Two. A visually impaired local resident visits the school to talk about the work of guide dogs (accompanied, of course, by his own animal). A local restaurateur visited the school to prepare and serve Indian cuisine (supported by the headteacher's own slides and stories

about cooking in India). The choir has sung in the town centre to raise money for charity and will be performing carols at various venues nearer Christmas. Good links have been made with the local branch of J Sainsbury plc. The food advisor has done food technology classes with pupils, and the store provided free fruit for pupils to develop good eating habits during the Health Education week last term. Pupils have visited the store to support learning in geography and mathematics. The local Methodist church allows the school to use its hall for productions. The minister has visited the school on special occasions like Harvest Festival. Sporting links have been set up with Somerset Cricket Club and Bridgwater Rugby Club.

26. The school has satisfactory relationships with its partner institutions, including well-established arrangements when pupils join or leave the school. Reception class teachers are beginning the much needed process of developing closer links with feeder nurseries and playgroups as part of which they are setting up a toy library for pre-school children. The school is currently discussing the development of curriculum links in science, information technology and design and technology with its principal secondary school partner. It has a long history of involvement with the Bridgwater Primary School Sports Association and regularly competes against other schools in chess, football and cricket. Pupils have recently taken part in events organised by the county music service at Shepton Mallet and Minehead.

27. Provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is satisfactory and the timetable now allows for it to be taught in all classes. This term the two coordinators have put in place a well-planned scheme of work which will allow for progression from year to year during a pupil's time at the school, although they have had no opportunity as yet to monitor teaching or provide training. Currently, there is inconsistency in the teaching of PSHE in the school: in some classes it is taught to a very good standard and in others less successfully. In addition, the new scheme of work has some overlap with that for religious education. This can lead to repetition and confusion as in Year 4, where the topic in religious education is 'all about us' while in PSHE it is 'how we are special'. In addition, the school's programme of themes for assemblies is not linked to either scheme of work.

28. Overall provision for pupils' personal development is good. The calm positive climate within the school contributes effectively to the satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual development. Most teachers and other staff value pupils as individuals, giving them space for their thoughts, ideas and concerns. In some year groups, pupils have the opportunity to explore the beliefs and values of others during religious education lessons. For example pupils in Year 5 have looked at the ideas and nature of God in different religions. However, few acts of collective worship offer pupils time to reflect or recognise the existence of a deity. There are many opportunities to develop the pupils' sense of awe and wonder of the world around them but the school does not plan in times to draw out and develop these qualities as effectively as it might.

29. Arrangements for promoting pupils' moral and social development are good. The headteacher uses assembly times well to promote appropriate behaviour in and around the school and teachers regularly review and agree class rules with their pupils. As a result, pupils have a clear idea of what is expected of them. Opportunities are provided for boys and girls to be rewarded for good behaviour and for good work during the weekly 'rewards assemblies'. These are positive experiences for the pupils and in one assembly, observed during the inspection, a group of younger pupils were particularly proud to receive their certificates. Good opportunities to discuss moral issues are provided during personal, social and health education lessons especially during 'circle-times' and during planned programmes. A good example was a recent programme, led by the Head Teacher, entitled 'Kicking racism out of football'. Older pupils have responsibilities around the school such as ringing the bell, supervising the play equipment used a lunchtime, supporting the younger pupils in their classrooms during wet playtime and delivering registers and post to teachers. Many have received specific training in peer mediation to enable them to support other pupils in the playground.

30. Staff make satisfactory and improving provision for pupils' cultural development. Boys and girls have recently worked with a West African dance and drumming group and some pupils have been involved in a music extravaganza with several neighbouring schools. Good use was made of a teacher's experiences during a visit to Thailand, which was successfully enhanced by work from members of a local multicultural centre. The headteacher regularly talks to pupils in assemblies,

about significant people in history such as Dr. Martin Luther King. Visitors, such as the owner of a local Indian restaurant, are being encouraged into school to share their cultures. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to develop an understanding of their own cultures through visits and visitors to school. As noted above, the school makes use of the local area to support work in geography, history and particularly environmental studies. It has strong links with the Global Learning Education (GLADE) centre in Yeovil, which supports environmental and ecological projects such as 'Somerset Goes Global' last year. Through this, pupils had visitors who taught them about India and Thailand, and attended an African dance and drumming workshop. GLADE will be supporting the school's Citizenship Week later this academic year. They learn a little about world religions in their religious education lessons but many remain uncertain of the range of values and beliefs and of the rich racial and religious diversity that exists in their country.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. Arrangements the school makes for ensuring boys' and girls' safety and welfare are good. Procedures for child protection are very good. The headteacher and the relationship coordinator are both fully qualified child protection liaison officers, and between them they ensure that all new staff are fully briefed on their arrival. Additional updates are provided whenever one of the liaison officers attends relevant training. The child protection policy follows local authority guidelines, and the school works closely with the relevant external agencies. Procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils and the whole school community are much improved and now good. The health and safety policy clearly outlines everybody's responsibilities and the headteacher has put in place good risk assessment procedures, using local authority guidelines. Since his arrival he has arranged for the local authority to carry out a general and a fire risk assessment, and for qualified contractors to maintain physical education equipment, and electrical and fire appliances. All hazards identified by risk assessment have been dealt with and all actions taken are logged. It is intended that the governors will play the lead role in monitoring health and safety. There are three fully qualified first aiders and several first aid posts around the school and all treatment is properly recorded. The school gives staff information about pupils with particular health problems such as allergies or diabetes but does not use alert cards giving clear details of appropriate treatment.

32. The relocation of the school reception area to the front of the site from the centre means that all other entrances can now be locked during the school day. This has improved security enormously: previously the school suffered repeated intrusions from unauthorised and sometimes aggressive visitors. The improved security has also reduced the amount of vandalism and graffiti.

33. Procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour, and for eliminating oppressive behaviour, are good overall. The behaviour policy has been reviewed and rewritten. A system of rewards and sanctions, and the kind of behaviour expected from pupils, is clearly explained to both to them and to their parents. A shorter period of play after lunch and the introduction of playground toys have greatly improved behaviour both in the playground and during afternoon lessons. The lunchtime supervisory staff have traditionally always been linked to particular year groups: additionally some are reluctant to change the nature of their duties by promoting play activities. However, others help pupils with skipping or play games with them. All Year 6 pupils can train to be peer mediators during lunchtime play. Procedures are regularly modified following feedback from pupils and lunchtime supervisory staff. The headteacher has good systems for recording incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour and the actions taken to deal with them, but standards and methods of behaviour management in class do not yet consistently follow the agreed procedures in all classes.

34. Arrangements made for monitoring and supporting personal development are satisfactory. Teachers try to get to know their pupils and their families and pupils are confident that teachers and the headteacher in particular will help them with any problems. Personal, social and health development is now taught in all classes. In addition, a teacher with counselling qualifications holds one-to-one sessions with pupils or small groups to help them improve their self-esteem. The school worked hard last year, under the determined leadership of the health education coordinator, to achieve the Healthy Schools Award, which was confirmed during the inspection week. Provision for health and drugs education, and for sex and relationship education, is very good as a result. The school has well-developed links with outside agencies as a further consequence of the Healthy Schools project. All pupils have responsibilities in their own classrooms and Year 6 pupils help in

many different ways around the school, notably in the peer mediation scheme. There is as yet no school council. The school gives certificates for effort and academic achievement as well as achievements of other kinds, for instance for one pupil's persistence in weeding. Except in the foundation stage and other than very brief notes made by the counsellor of her one-to-one sessions with pupils, no formal records of pupils' personal development are kept.

35. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. The rearrangement of the site means that all late arrivals now have to enter via the school office. By introducing a book in which a reason has to be noted for unpunctuality, a marked drop in the numbers concerned has been noted. Registration fulfils statutory requirements, and registers are swiftly returned to the office. The school follows up any unexplained absence within 24 hours. An answerphone is permanently in place to take any out-of-hours messages from parents. The school does not yet use an electronic system to record and monitor attendance but the administrative assistant and class teachers monitor attendance informally and draw any concerns to the attention of the headteacher. The importance of regular attendance is stressed in the prospectus and newsletters. Recruitment problems at the educational welfare service have meant that the school has not been visited for some while, but it is hoped that the officer now in post will establish a pattern of regular visits.

36. There are no set criteria, agreed by all staff, for identifying pupils who need additional support, particularly in the short-term. Use is made of information from commercial reading and spelling tests but these do not give the sort of information to judge the level or type of need or precisely what the pupil needs to do to improve. As a result, it is very likely that some pupils who would benefit from support are not being identified and helped. The school has appropriate links with outside agencies that offer advice and support for pupils with a range of difficulties. During the inspection a member of the speech and language support team was in school to discuss the needs of individual pupils. No pupils currently in the school have a statement of special educational needs.

37. Systems for assessing and reporting pupils' attainment are now established. A range of National and Standardised tests are used throughout Key Stages 1 and 2 to monitor attainment and progress. Commercial schemes are used for Maths and English to set Year 6 pupils and to organise groups across the school. A tracking system has been devised for each year group. This is in its early stages and needs further development to properly monitor and evaluate pupils' progress across the whole school. Although these procedures are in place, assessment outcomes are not being effectively used to inform planning and help pupils make progress. The monitoring of individual pupil progress is only satisfactory and needs to be improved. This is because the fullest use is not made of existing procedures to provide a mechanism by which the school can easily record pupil attainment compared to National Standards, monitor progress of these over time and set individual and group targets for improvement. Insufficient attention has been paid to assessing pupils' work against National Curriculum criteria with teachers in year groups levelling and moderating samples. Pupils have few opportunities to assess their own learning against national criteria. There are some examples of good practice across the school; e.g. baseline assessment and the beginnings of tracking in Key Stage 1, but these are in their early stages.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

38. Parents' views of the school were good, although only a minority offered their opinions. They think that their children enjoy going to school, the teaching is good, and the staff are very approachable. They believe the school helps their children to mature, and that behaviour is good. Pupils are expected to work hard and do their best, and that they make good progress. Parents think the school is well led and managed. They are pleased the security of the school is much better, although it was pointed out (correctly) that it can be difficult to attract attention at lunchtime when the school office is unmanned. Some parents thought that the arrangements for homework and the quality of extracurricular provision could be improved, but the findings of the inspection team do not support these views although younger pupils have fewer opportunities in this area.

39. A large number of the governors are past or present parents of Eastover pupils. Their enthusiasm and willingness to get involved has had a positive impact on the attitudes of the parent body. The creation of a parent run fund-raising body in the last year has also helped to raise parents' confidence that they can make a positive impact on the daily life of their children's school. The new parents' association raised over £4,000 in its first nine months some of which was used for playground toys and redecoration. Parents give good support to the annual fairs and the termly children's discos, willingly helping to run stalls and provide refreshments. About fifteen parents help regularly in school, some in class, some by accompanying pupils on swimming lessons. Parents are always willing to help on offsite visits or during special occasions such as Health Education Week. One parent runs a soccer club, and others help with the cookery and the new craft club. They now make a good impact on the work of the school and this is a real improvement.

40. Parents provide a satisfactory level of support for their children's learning at home and at school. More than three-quarters attend parents' consultation evenings and they often send in relevant material to support learning, for instance mementoes of World War Two, or postcards and other items from Greece. Many parents take their children to the local library, or help them negotiate the Internet, when they need to do research tasks at home. Most parents hear their children read regularly, although few do so nightly. However, a minority of parents find it difficult or impossible to support their children's learning for a variety of reasons.

41. The headteacher has made it a priority to improve links with parents and they have improved greatly. He is almost always available for informal consultation on the playground before and after school and class teachers too can be easily contacted at the end of the day. The school has begun to establish a toy library with the help of the family worker funded by the Educational Action Zone, and she is anxious to develop other ways to support families in and out of school. She will be present at the regular drop-in coffee mornings the headteacher will be holding for parents next term. A room has been set aside for parents' use, and they are welcomed into the staffroom when helping in school. A home-school agreement is in place, and parents are invited to termly consultation evenings. The school does everything it can to support families going through difficulties such as serious illnesses, as grateful parents testified during the inspection.

42. Information provided for parents is satisfactory overall. Newsletters contain useful information about forthcoming events and report on those that have taken place. However, they are issued only twice a term. The prospectus and the governors' report both fulfil statutory requirements and are attractively designed using clear, helpful language. 'Meet the Teachers' sessions were held at the start of this school year when parents were told about school life and the work their children would be doing. Information was also sent out in written form, the quality varying from very good to very brief. The quality of pupils' annual reports is unsatisfactory overall. They give no indication of whether a pupil's achievement is below, at or above that expected for their age group. Comments on subjects other than mathematics and English are sometimes so brief as to be almost meaningless. For instance, a report on a pupil's progress in design and technology consists in its entirety of the words 'she likes to work with a partner when designing and making things'. Comments on mathematics and English list what pupils have achieved (for instance, 'he can name three-dimensional shapes') without explaining whether this means that their progress is satisfactory. The targets (sometimes relating to English, sometimes to mathematics, and sometimes to personal development) are either not targets at all, but merely comment ('she needs to improve her handwriting') or too vague to be achievable ('he must continue to be enthusiastic'). The imprecision of report writing reflects the limitations of assessment procedures.

43. The special needs coordinator (SENCO) appropriately arranges to meet with parents/carers of pupils who are receiving additional support. This is offered during the consultation evenings with the child's class teacher. Targets on individual education plans, which have been prepared for their child, are discussed with the parents/carers. If they are unable to attend the SENCO writes to the parents/carers informing them of their child's targets. However, few parent/carers or children are involved in actually setting the targets.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

44. When the new head took over in 2001, he inherited a staff and governing body who had had very little experience of playing a full role in management and decision making. Roles and responsibilities were unclear with several teachers in enhanced posts without specific job descriptions or significant responsibilities. Very little monitoring and evaluation was taking place especially in the classrooms and little had been done to initiate performance management procedures. With the school in six different buildings and several classrooms only accessible from the outside, a lack of clear whole school policies and procedures led to major inconsistencies in expectations and provision. Despite national initiatives and the major input of ideas, funding, resources and support available and seen in other schools, little had changed for several years. Security was a big problem with casual visitors able to wander around the separate buildings without proper checks on their identity. Working closely with the chair of governors and with a lot of help and support from hard working senior colleagues, very good leadership and effective management by the head has ensured that the school has moved a long way on all these issues.

45. Very sensibly, the head concentrated first on securing the school and ensuring that the necessary management structures and procedures were in place to start to involve everyone in the process of making decisions to improve the school. The first task has been very successfully completed with the perimeter sealed and all visitors checking in with the school secretary. This also made it possible for the offices and staffroom to be substantially upgraded and so improve working conditions for all staff. Progress in the second area was initially much slower with several staff resistant to change and to the requirement for them to take a full role in the management of the school. To get the process moving, the head took responsibility for all performance management in the first cycle and in the process, several staff left. A series of very good appointments have added a new perspective to the role of staff in whole school management with very good developments in physical education, design technology, music and the foundation stage. Most remaining senior staff have taken the lead from the head, accepted their very substantial roles and responsibilities and are working hard with him to move the school forward. They have shown great loyalty and commitment in helping him to work through a very difficult transitional phase. However, at the moment, the deputy head is not showing the same level of support or making a sufficiently positive contribution to the leadership and management of the whole school.

46. The governing body had not traditionally been involved in taking an active strategic role in decision making or in monitoring the school's work. Governors were too reliant on the previous head for information and so not sufficiently aware of the appropriateness of decisions made. Most of the present governing body are recent appointments but it is clear that, individually and as a group, they have the best interests of the school at heart and are prepared to fulfil the role the school requires of them. With the help of the head, the current chair has introduced a full range of committees and working groups, and individual responsibilities have been established with a full range of meetings set up for the school year. Appropriate structures and procedures are in place and business is being conducted efficiently and well. Governors have a good awareness about what is going on around the school but the chair and head are aware that they need to become sufficiently well informed through 'hands on' monitoring and relevant training to question and challenge and to take an active role in strategic planning.

47. The special needs coordinator (SENCO) has worked hard to try to improve the quality of paperwork required to ensure that all pupils who are finding learning or conforming difficult have the support to which they are entitled. However, as already indicated in several sections above, there is still some way to go to make the system fully effective.

48. As noted above, the school did not have a tradition of monitoring and evaluating its work or the impact of its actions or the progress its pupils made. On its disparate site, this led to all sorts of anomalies and inconsistencies. The head has introduced the concept of self-evaluation and used performance management to encourage existing staff to take more responsibility for their own development and that of their areas of responsibility. The arrival of new staff who are used to this approach has been a big help in moving this area forward. Planning and decision making is being based more and more on first hand information but the limitations of current assessment and recording arrangements mean that data about individual and group progress is not sufficiently detailed or specific to national standards for staff and governors to evaluate trends and priorities.

49. The school budgets systematically for all expenditure and has benefited greatly from well targeted spending that reflects the priorities the school has identified. Its strategic use of resources, including funding, is good. On joining the school the Headteacher quickly recognised that better use could be made of the accommodation available and that the site was not secure. By working with the whole school community and tapping into available grants and funds, such as Education Achievement Zone (EAZ) and DCFG funds, the Headteacher and governors have brought about many improvements in accommodation. They include providing a new networked computer suite, a design technology / science room, staff room and administration block and a secure site. The newly formed Friends of Eastover Community Primary School have raised over £4000 in its first year for the benefit of the school. Already they have matched funding with EAZ to refurbish the play areas, classrooms and junior hall, donated lunchtime play equipment and library books to every classroom and funded new staging for the junior hall. All this illustrates how staff and governors are actively involved in identifying priorities for development and using the resources effectively to bring about change.

50. With everyone involved in the process and due regard being given to the outcomes of performance management, EAZ and local authority priorities and a strategic view of the school, the school development plan (SDP) is much improved. A school based survey has also been used to help determine the priorities for development. It identifies proposed developments for a three year time span and includes the necessary detail to enable governors to properly monitor its progress. A positive development is that in addition, subject coordinators are beginning to draw up their own action plans and bid for funding and time to carry them through. Bids are negotiated with the headteacher and shared with the governing body before budget allocations are made. Governors are provided with on-going budget details and they regularly monitor and evaluate the progress of the SDP and the emerging financial position. This is a big improvement on the last inspection which stated that "Although staff and governors have worked well together to help set the priorities in the current school development plan, review and monitoring the school's performance are not promoted systematically." However, there is a need to re-evaluate the impact of historic spending decisions in the light of the school's current position and future needs.

51. Clear limits are put on how much can be spent in each area and how much can be moved from one budget to another. Sufficient levels of responsibilities for spending are delegated to staff with management positions; for example subject co-ordinators manage the budget for their subject. Analysis of assessment results and other information is provided for the governors so that best use is made of available funds to bring about improvement in standards. However this is not as helpful as it might be because of the weaknesses in the school's assessment procedures. Alternative means of funding are actively explored as noted above. The school uses extra sources of funding available effectively. Competitive quotations are sought where appropriate in accordance with the school's Best Value Statement. Appropriate funds and resources are used for the purposes intended. For example DCFG funds were used for security and curriculum resources. The school receives good support from parents.

52. Systems of financial control are good and respective roles and responsibilities are appropriately defined. Good accounting records are maintained and monitored by the school. The school's finance secretary works very closely with the head and governing body and provides high quality support. Efficient and unobtrusive administration systems in the school support the day to day running of the school. However, an unintended consequence of the move to the front of the school is that the administrative team has become somewhat isolated. A finance computer package is used efficiently to raise orders and monitor spending. The most recent external audit, at present in draft form, highlighted the need to strengthen controls over expenditure using the chequebook account, as staff sometimes 'circumvented' the present procedures. This issue is already being addressed. Overall the audit acknowledges that "The headteacher and finance officer have established good levels of financial control across all areas; however, monitoring arrangements need to be strengthened to ensure that controls are operating effectively."

53. Generally teaching and non-teaching staff are well deployed throughout the school. However much of the additional teaching support for pupils with extra needs happens outside the classroom

and away from the rich classroom environment. At the same time subject coordinators have hardly any non contact time to monitor their subject or teach alongside colleagues. There is scope for the school to review the use of teaching staff without a class commitment to ensure the best strategic use is made of a valuable resource. While there are some good examples of learning support assistants being very actively involved in pupils' learning, this is not consistent and in several classes they are not being used to their best advantage.

54. Despite many changes, the school has a good match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum and a good mix of experienced and new teaching staff. Any gaps in curriculum expertise were identified and taken into account when appointments were made. For example in music, where previously the school lacked a subject specialist, the new coordinator is already having a positive impact on teaching and learning. The recent appointments have strengthened the teaching staff by bringing energy and enthusiasm to an already hard working committed group of people. One negative effect of the changes is that subject coordination in some subjects is less secure with temporary coordinators leading the subject and no coordinator for art. The school's involvement in teacher training initiatives ensures new colleagues are well looked after. As a result arrangements for the induction of new staff are good. The school makes every effort to make staff part of the team as quickly as possible. Newly-qualified teachers have identified mentors, built in non-contact time for induction purposes and have observed their colleagues teaching as well as teachers at neighbouring schools. Sufficient support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum are deployed to meet the needs of the pupils.

55. Accommodation is satisfactory, despite the inherent problems associated with the school being housed in seven separate buildings and the lack of a grassed area of any size. Since the last inspection many changes have taken place to improve the accommodation available. A new computer suite has been installed in the former staff room, the old kitchen area has been converted into a science and technology area and a new classroom for Year 4 was opened in 2001. Staff and administrative facilities have been much improved by the move to Cornborough Place. This, with other organisational changes, has made the site far more secure. The school library is small but adequate. However, both the halls are narrow, cramped and far too small to accommodate a large class for gymnastics etc. They are poor acoustically and the fixed apparatus available is inadequate. The space available is also reduced by the need to store apparatus or staging in the halls. Some of the large equipment for PE is looking a little tired and needs replacing (eg PE mats).

56. The school's extensive hard areas are well used at playtime and for games activities. Part of the hard area is used as a car park. Towards the rear of the site is a small grassed area with play apparatus in the corner, which is quite difficult to access as it is away from the hard areas. The buildings are clean and tidy and in reasonable condition externally. Learning resources are adequate for the demands of the curriculum in most subjects. The resources for information technology have been much improved by the provision of the new computer suite and are now good. In most subjects resources are well stored. The school makes good use of the available storage space with several dedicated storage areas. Resources are clearly labelled and accessible.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. To make the most of much improved teaching and raise expectations throughout the school, the governors, headteacher and staff of Eastover School should:

- (1) Improve the identification, evaluation and support for boys and girls who find learning or conforming difficult by:
 - making class teachers, learning support assistants, parents and the children themselves the key contributors to the process with the class teacher in the lead supported by the special needs coordinator
 - using initial assessment as a tool for identifying four-year-olds at risk of failing and starting targeted help in their first term in school and
 - screening all pupils who join the school at a later date as soon as they enter the school to identify any gaps in their learning and if found, by providing a planned programme to help them catch up

- developing more precise ways of identifying each child's specific difficulties and needs and monitoring progress, and keeping detailed records of the schools actions and their impact (see below)
- involving all the key contributors in setting specific short term, small scale, achievable targets, reviewing them regularly and using this information to adjust the targets, the nature of support or the degree of concern accordingly
- making it a whole school policy that all pupils learn alongside schoolmates in normal classroom activities unless there are good educational reasons for not doing so
- timing and planning any necessary out-of-class support so that it complements what is going on in the class and does not mean that the child misses out on other subjects
- ensuring that the efforts of these children are also regularly reviewed and celebrated as part of any whole class summing up at the end of a session

(Paragraphs 7, 19, 36, 43, 47, 79 & 89)

(2) Develop assessment arrangements in the core subjects that are sufficiently rigorous and detailed to make it possible to track the progress of individual pupils and year groups against national standards over time and set challenging but attainable work and targets by:

- using the information gained from tests when children start school as a baseline from which to measure subsequent progress
- using literacy and numeracy plans as a basis for recording what pupils know, understand and can do within National Curriculum levels
- developing existing procedures for matching samples of pupils' work against agreed national levels to check the accuracy of these records and validate judgements
- making use of existing standardised tests as well as optional national tests to audit teachers judgements about pupil's achievements and analyse strengths and weaknesses within subjects
- developing a means of keeping an easily accessible running record of these and subsequent similar assessments
- using the information gained to set specific individual targets throughout each pupil's school career and monitor progress towards them
- sharing this information with parents and pupils so that they know what they need to do to get to the next level
- collating this information to provide data about progress in parallel classes, by gender, across the whole ability range and in year groups.
- exploiting existing expertise to make best use of information technology to manage and interpret assessment data

(Paragraphs 36, 37, 42, 48, 51, 76, 87, 95, 105 & 134)

(3) Ensure that pupils in each year group cover the same work in science, the foundation subjects and religious education in a comparable way, with the same level of expectation and with the same levels of confidence and competence by:

- developing support materials in science, art and religious education of the same high quality as those recently drawn up in physical education, design technology and music
- making sufficient time available for all subject coordinators to monitor and evaluate what is happening in parallel classes and across the school and provide support and training where necessary
- expanding the practice of teachers making best use of any subject expertise by using it in other classes or working alongside less confident colleagues

(Paragraphs 4, 17, 21, 98, 100, 105, 114 & 123)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Behaviour in some classes falls below expected standards and it is not always dealt with consistently (Paragraphs 9, 33, 117)
- Pupils in Year 6 are not achieving as well as pupils in the rest of the school (Paragraphs 4, 19, 67,70, 73, 81, 84)
- Computers in classrooms are underused as a resource for working in other subjects (Paragraphs 85, 116, 118)
- The very ordinary quality of collective worship and provision for pupils spiritual development (Paragraphs 28, 30,134)
- Reports are not very informative (Paragraph 42)
- The limited role of the deputy head in whole school leadership and management (Paragraph 45)
- Learning Support Assistants could be more involved in pupils' learning (Paragraph 53, 84)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	80
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	18	34	24	3		
Percentage	1	23	42	30	4		

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		422
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		31

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	32	29	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	23	28
	Girls	24	25	26
	Total	49	48	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (87)	79 (78)	89 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	28	28
	Girls	24	25	26
	Total	49	53	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (85)	87 (90)	89 (83)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	34	29	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	23	24
	Girls	24	20	25
	Total	48	43	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (90)	68 (84)	78 (86)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	23	23
	Girls	24	20	25
	Total	46	43	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (88)	68 (86)	76 (88)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	349	2	
White – Irish			
White – any other White background	2		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian			
Mixed – any other mixed background			
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1		
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani			
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean			
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese			
Any other ethnic group	8		
No ethnic group recorded			

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

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	30.1

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	211

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	819468
Total expenditure	788055
Expenditure per pupil	1885
Balance brought forward from previous year	37670
Balance carried forward to next year	31413

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8.6
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
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

422

Number of questionnaires returned

80

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	27	4	1	
My child is making good progress in school.	57	35	3	3	
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	48	4		
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	49	11	1	
The teaching is good.	59	38	3		
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	43	19	3	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	37	9		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	26	1		
The school works closely with parents.	29	60	10	1	
The school is well led and managed.	46	47	6		
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	45	3	1	
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	30	11	3	

Other issues raised by parents

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

58. Among the many recent improvements at Eastover School, the transformation in the provision made for very young children when they start school has probably been the most remarkable. The very good appointment of two well-qualified foundation stage specialists well versed in what is now expected of reception teachers and their pupils has seen many very necessary changes in the environment and culture of the two classes. Just as important is the fact that all the staff are planning and working together for the good of all the children. Before children started in September, and even before the teachers had technically started at the school, they had made major improvements to the tired and grey accommodation by redecorating it themselves and having a major tidy up and sort out of furniture and equipment. With the purchase of a good range of extra equipment, notably large outdoor play equipment, the environment is now bright, inviting and very well suited to the needs of young children.

59. Working together, the two teachers have scrapped the old curriculum that was inappropriate for four-year-olds, for one where boys and girls can work towards the early learning goals in the six areas of learning and explore purposeful play. Very good use is now being made of the available accommodation with well-prepared areas set up for pupils to experience a range of activities leading to the early learning goals. An open outside area is being increasingly used for play with larger apparatus but because this is not fenced off so that equipment can be left out and because access is not straightforward, it cannot be integrated as an ongoing activity during 'choosing' times. However, plans are being made to make this possible. The school does not have a history of working closely with pre-school providers and children had a limited introduction to school before they started. However, the new teachers are very keen to build up good relationships with their foundation stage colleagues in pre-school groups in the town in preparation for next year.

60. Initial assessments confirm that when boys and girls start school, their attainment is below average. Many children start school with poorly developed skills, particularly in speaking, listening and mathematical development. With half of all lessons very good and excellent and nearly all the rest good, and very good support from helpers, boys and girls are making good progress in all the areas of learning. However, the majority of children are still only making their way across the stepping stones to the early learning goals and many will not achieve them all by the time they move into year one. In spite of this, early indications are that, by the time they move into Year 1, this group of children will have achieved a great deal more than pupils now in Years 1,2 and 3.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. Boys and girls are more than happy to come to school and the sensible way most come into class and sort themselves out in the mornings is a good indication of their growing self-esteem confidence in their 'teachers'. They all already know the various routines and expectations well and are capable of looking after themselves and working on their own when the opportunity arises. However, most play alongside their classmates rather than with them. A good exception to this came in outside session with several lovely cameos of groups of children acting in role together. Staff take any opportunity to encourage children in this area. In a lesson in the computer suite, more confident computer users who finished early were paired with those who were struggling to help them. A key factor in the progress being made is the very good role model provided by all adults working with foundation children. Relationships are very good and all interactions value what children are trying to do. Consequently, despite their limited language skills, most boys and girls are not afraid to put their hands up and make their contribution to any discussion in the knowledge that whatever they say will be taken seriously.

Communication, language and literacy

62. High quality provision for developing boys and girls language and literacy skills is seeing them make good progress in their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills from a low base. Almost

without exception, children listen attentively but many have limited speaking skills, some only responding with words or phrases. Teachers are very aware of this and devote a lot of time to encouraging boys and girls to express themselves. In the first lesson of the week, the teacher gave children a special time to say what they had done. Responses ranged from a long rambling story to a nod to a leading question, with the teacher tailoring her questions and responses to individual children. Books are very important and every opportunity is taken to promote the enjoyment of 'reading' such as when the teacher used 'Telephone Ted' to introduce an afternoon session. A few higher attainers are being encouraged to 'read' with volunteers. An account of excellent provision in this area is noted in the teaching section above. For most boys and girls, writing is at a very early stage and several still have to come to terms with holding a pencil properly. However, many who could not write or recognise their names before they started school now can.

Mathematical development

63. Boys and girls are given the opportunity to take part in mathematical activities for an hour-long session each day with a good mix of purposeful tasks well matched to the capabilities of the children. Counting songs and rhymes such as 'Five Little Monkeys' are well used to help children remember the order and sound of numbers and concepts such as one more or less. Most children are still at a very basic stage in working with numbers and require a good deal of patient support to put them in order in a number line and work out that '0' is what you get when you count back from 1. Working in groups, higher attainers put 10 apples on a tree but the teacher has to write them down for most to copy. A middle group drawing round number shapes recognise numerals from 1 to 6 and some 7 but none know 9. Most can show 1 to 5 but not above. In the lower achieving group most can recite 1 to 5 but few recognise them or can put them in order.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Children's technological skills are encouraged through a number of play activities. Most cope well with assembling and taking construction kits apart and a group enjoyed making fireworks with a helper as part of a mathematics session. The classroom computers are in use daily and in a very good information technology lesson taken in the computer suite, the teacher made very good use of the interactive whiteboard to help her young charges to understand how to 'dress the teddy'. This is one area where boys and girls are doing well and they show a good understanding of how to use the computers. With the nationally famous town carnival at the end of the week, this provided a very good focus for lots of work. In a religious education session it was used to introduce the idea and talk about celebrations and special events such as weddings and festivals. A group proudly made hot dogs with the learning support assistant for the rest of the class in the new technology room. All this culminated in the children's own carnival at the end of the week where self-made hats, costumes and marching were much enjoyed by children and adults alike.

Physical development

65. Many classroom activities give children the chance to practise and develop skills with their hands. They have ample opportunity to handle small tools for cutting, sticking, painting, drawing, writing and putting together and taking apart construction kits. However, many have poorly developed fine motor skills with few able to trace over lines and several having difficulty using scissors. They enjoy the times when they are able to use the hall for physical education although the apparatus in it is too large and cumbersome for young children to use effectively. Children really enjoyed their first afternoon outside lesson using all the new toys and equipment and showed good physical and social skills in doing so. By joining in and really engaging with children's play, teachers made a very good contribution to their participation and enjoyment of being active.

Creative development

66. Children have regular planned opportunities to use play dough, paint and draw and they respond well to specific tasks such as drawing a picture of teddy and cutting out stars and moons to make night pictures. However, their immature work in art reflects their development in other areas. They enjoy the chance to paint, draw and make things and set about creative activities with enthusiasm. The pictures they produce are lively and colourful but many are immature, for some still marks on paper. No music lessons were seen during the inspection but teacher's planning indicates that music is at least a weekly activity with other opportunities to sing songs and rhymes and make patterns and rhythms in lessons such as numeracy.

ENGLISH

67. Standards in English are below the national average at the ends of Years 2 and 6. However most pupils are achieving well except in Year 6 where achievement is satisfactory. Boys and girls in Years 3 and 5 are making the best progress. Overall good teaching is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. The school has identified the need to focus on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills because many start school with limited communication skills and as a result progress in this area is good. Writing is another key area identified by the school but pupils still have too few opportunities to write independently for a sustained period, particularly in Year 6.

68. By the end of Year 2, attainment in speaking and listening is as expected. Pupils listen carefully and are keen to answer questions giving sufficient detail when necessary. In Year 1 some pupils retell story 'We're going on a Bear Hunt' in some detail and other talk imaginatively about a picture. Pupils in Year 2 use a series of simple pictures well to retell a story about a surprise for a king speaking clearly and confidently to the rest of the class who listen attentively. Year 6 talk and listen confidently in a range of situations and their attainment is average. In literacy they describe the plot in 'Boy' and discuss issues sensibly as to where the headteacher should have punished the pupil when the incident took place outside school. Several were very keen to take part in a role-play activity concerning a meeting between the headteacher and the pupil's mother. Younger pupils talk about their books and make interesting suggestions of verbs to use in their poems.

69. Attainment in reading is average in Year 2 and pupils are achieving well. Most are able to use a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words and talk enthusiastically about the books which they enjoy reading. Year 1 pupils are beginning to recognise letter sounds and patterns. The teacher uses a puppet effectively to develop their knowledge and understanding of letter recognition. However, few pupils knew where the school library is located and were unable to explain how to find a non-fiction book in a library.

70. By the end of Year 6, attainment in reading is below the national average. Too few pupils are reading text beyond that expected for their age and many are reading books below. They show a keen interest in reading and many have a favourite author. However, few can explain their preferences in any detail. Most read text with some expression, particularly text which they enjoy reading. For example, during one lesson pupils read paragraphs from 'Boy' by Roald Dahl and at the end of the lesson several pupils said how much they had enjoyed the lesson. Most can explain clearly how the library is organised and know how to use non-fiction books for research. However, although the aim of the teachers in Year 6 is to encourage pupils to read for pleasure, a daily reading session that involves all reading the same book around the class, prior to an hour's literacy session does not meet the needs of most pupils. It does not provide more able pupils with the opportunity to read at their level nor does it enable the less able pupils to experience success. Pupils in Year 3 read a range of books, appropriate to their needs with interest and enthusiasm. They talk confidently about the cover, predicting what the story might be about and listen carefully to each other in their group. Others in Years 3 and 4 enjoy sharing a variety of poems and pupils in Year 5 understand the format for instructional text.

71. In Year 2, improving standards in writing are still below the national average. The school has a focus on raising standards in writing and this is beginning to make a difference to pupils' learning. Year 1 pupils sequence events in a story correctly. Most explain what is happening in the pictures but few pupils were confident to try to write their own sentences about the picture unaided. In Year 2, pupils use a white board effectively to write sentences based on a series of pictures about a king's surprise. This gave them confidence and they were then able to write their own story unaided in their books. Above average and average pupils are able to write more than one sentence and are beginning to show their understanding of punctuation. Below average pupils are using simple phrases to communicate meaning. They are using recognisable words and letters and can tell an adult what they have written. However very few pupils are expected to achieve levels above those expected for their age.

72. Standards in writing in year six are below the national average. Few pupils are expected to

achieve Level 5 by the end of the year and many will not reach the expected Level 4. Most pupils' writing is appropriately organised, imaginative and clear but vocabulary choices are not adventurous and few pupils are confident to use words for effect. Although there is an emphasis on spellings and pupils are achieving well in spelling tests, they are not able to apply their knowledge in their work. They have few opportunities to write unaided for a long period to produce interesting, detailed pieces of writing. Pupils in Year 3 begin to understand the impact of powerful verbs in their writing and understand how changing verbs has an impact without necessarily changing the meaning. They were able to do this using the poem 'Fireworks'. In Year 4, pupils write interesting short poems about the weather. Year 5 pupils write simple instructions for an alien to survive on earth as a culmination of a week's work on instructional text and pupils were well able to explain what they had learnt during the week at the end of the lesson.

73. Good teaching and learning is currently having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Lessons are well planned using a range of commercial schemes and most teachers are adapting the structure of the literacy strategy effectively to meet the needs of their pupils. Tasks are usually suitably planned to meet the needs of all pupils. However in Year 6, although pupils work in two groups, according to their ability, all within each group have the same task. In some lessons lower down in the school when pupils do have the same task they are well supported by learning support assistant and specific teacher focus during the lesson. This enables the lower ability pupils to make the same progress as the rest of the class. Teachers manage pupils well but do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils can do. Most question well to promote discussions but the slow pace of some lessons means they have to work hard to keep pupils interested.

74. In very good lessons, teachers keep up a brisk pace throughout the session, question skilfully to assess knowledge and understanding and have very good relationships with the pupils. In turn, pupils respond extremely well to the teachers, know exactly what is expected of them and make very good progress during the lessons.

75. Very little use is made of information technology to support English, except with pupils who find learning difficult. These were using a computer program satisfactorily to reinforce a teaching point about spellings. A satisfactory range of multicultural books being used by teachers make a satisfactory contribution to pupils cultural development.

76. Although the school uses a number of commercial reading and spelling tests to assess individual attainment and progress, the information gathered is not sufficient to identify whole school issues or the next step the school needs to take to raise standards. Much work has been done to show improvement over time but this information is reliant on the accuracy of teacher assessment combined with commercial schemes. However these schemes bear little resemblance to the national assessments which pupils have to undertake at specific times during their schooling. For example, teachers regularly assess pieces of pupil's writing but they either do this individually or with the teacher in the parallel class. It has been some time since teachers sat together as a whole group to ensure that all have the same expectations for each national curriculum level of attainment in English. Marking is inconsistent; where there is good practice, it is positive and the pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve. In other classes it is less constructive.

77. English is well led and managed by a hard working and experienced coordinator who has identified key areas for improvement such as the recent focus in developing pupils' speaking and listening skills which has led to improved standards in these areas. She has also highlighted the need to increase the use of information technology in English. Satisfactory opportunities have been provided to monitor planning, samples of pupils' work and to talk to pupils but there has been little opportunity recently for the coordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning in English, especially in Key Stage 2. Resources are satisfactory and the coordinator plans an audit of resources to confirm that there is an even distribution of resources across the school. Satisfactory resources in the library are appropriately managed by the library coordinator.

MATHEMATICS

78. Evidence obtained during the inspection from lesson observation, talking to children and analysis of work shows that standards in mathematics of the oldest pupils are below the national average; standards in mathematics of seven-year-olds are average. Ignoring the ups and downs, caused by weaker or stronger year groups of children, results show an overall improving trend similar to that achieved nationally. In some areas improvement is better. In the last inspection no seven-year-olds achieved Level 3, the highest level, and very few eleven-year-olds achieved the equivalent Level 5. In last year's national tests 22% of 7 and 11 year olds achieved Level 3 and Level 5 in their respective tests.

79. Through the successful introduction of the Numeracy Strategy and the accompanying improvement in provision, particularly teaching, most pupils are now making good progress throughout the school and are generally achieving well. However progress made by pupils with special educational needs is not so good, because learning targets are not specific to the emerging needs of the individual child. The Numeracy Strategy has brought necessary attention to detail in the planning and proper progression to the development of the subject. Its introduction and the commitment of the staff is having a positive impact on learning and is no doubt a major factor in the absence of any unsatisfactory teaching in the subject during the inspection.

80. Attainment of pupils on entry is below average with very few higher attaining pupils. Pupils' knowledge, skills and methods of working in mathematics increase and refine as they work through the school and they begin to develop good work habits. Pupils in Year 1 count forward in 'clicks and cheeks' in unison to 50. Typically they are able to use non-standard units, such as string or cubes, to measure the length of objects. In Year 2 pupils recognise that $400+30+6=436$ and identify three numbers from a list which add up to 11. By the age of seven, pupils recognise two-dimensional shapes, for example squares, triangles, circles and hexagons and can use their own data, such as the number of cubes that can be put in a shoe, to help construct bar charts and graphs. In Year 3 pupils recognise the relationship between 'doubling' and 'halving' numbers and are developing their concept of fractions of objects, such as pizza.

81. By Year 4 pupils are able to identify the link between the 2x and 4x table. They recognise half past, quarter past and quarter to the hour and know the relationship between the main units of time (eg seconds in a minute). Year 5 pupils are able to measure and work out the perimeter of a rectangle. They explain the need to only measure two sides to calculate the perimeter. Attainment in the oldest classes is overall below average. For example in the higher ability set, pupils did not know that there are 180 degrees in a triangle and in the lower set pupils struggled to ask appropriate questions to be able to identify a 2D shape. However, Year 6 pupils are developing their computational ability and can typically 'long multiply' using two methods. The quality of presentation and the way pupils record their work is generally satisfactory.

82. The teaching of mathematics is good in both key stages. Of the lessons observed teaching was at least satisfactory in all lessons, 75% were good or better and 12% very good. The quality of teaching in both key stages ranges from very good to satisfactory. Where teaching is better the pace of lessons is brisk, planning is well structured with clear learning objectives, work is closely matched to pupils of all abilities and questioning is skilful and challenging. Teachers have high expectations. Most pupils respond enthusiastically, particularly in 'mental maths', when they can write answers quickly on their individual whiteboards and explain their strategies. They work independently or with a classmate, share resources and cooperate well when required. Pupils are nearly always fully engaged and interested in their work. In many classes they move from class to group activities with a minimum of fuss, so maintaining the pace of learning. Pupils respect the feelings of their classmates and spontaneously show their appreciation when others share their work or give a correct answer. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory the work is not as well matched to the ability of the child or class management is weaker with the result that the pace of learning is slower. Pupils' work is regularly and consistently marked but rarely includes constructive comments to help them recognise how well they are doing and how they can improve.

83. Teachers identify clearly what is to be learnt in a lesson in their planning and this is shared with pupils when lessons begin. They use a good range of mathematical vocabulary and this results in pupils being able to explain their work using the correct terminology. The oral and mental sessions

are used effectively to give a clear start to the lesson. They are usually conducted at a brisk pace and different resources, such as number sticks, number boards and number cards enable every child the opportunity to answer and so be fully involved. Teachers give pupils the opportunity to explain their strategies and methods. For example, Year 2 pupils were encouraged to explain their method of doubling numbers in their head. In nearly all lessons observed the summing up was used effectively, but sometimes didn't properly draw together what had been learned in the lesson or highlight key facts or ideas that need to be remembered. Some teachers set time limits to ensure learning is productive and carried out at pace, but again in the 'very good' lessons pupils were given thinking time when needed.

84. Planning is now thorough and systematic and teaching and learning has improved as a result. Teachers are familiar and secure with the Numeracy Strategy, which they apply effectively. In most classes, work is matched to the ability of the pupils by the provision of work at three levels. However, this is not the case in the Year 6 ability grouped 'sets'. Teachers ensure activities are well chosen to involve all pupils, including lower achievers who are usually well supported by Learning Support Assistants (LSA) especially in group work. However, occasionally LSAs could be more involved in pupils' learning during the rest of the sessions.

85. The curriculum, based on the Framework for the National Numeracy Strategy is systematic and provides a wide ranging source of topics as pupils move through the school. Work is selected from a variety of sources. The availability of a computer in each classroom enables pupils to consolidate their learning by using programs containing maths related activities during lessons. However, few computers were used for this purpose in lessons observed.

86. Pupils are tested yearly using commercial tests throughout the school. Data from this and information obtained from KS1 and KS2 National tests (SATS) are analysed to identify differences in attainment of different groups (gender etc). Individual pupils, who are below or above their target, are also identified. Common errors and difficulties identified in completed mathematics assessments and test papers are used to adjust planning. The EAZ coordinator, working with members of the school staff, has carried out quite a thorough analysis of assessment data to identify the correlation between commercial and national tests for 11 year olds. Alongside these more formal assessments, on-going teacher assessments are made to inform short term planning. Information from half-termly teachers' assessments made through informal observations, questioning and mental tests is used to set targets written on the target card on the inside of the child's exercise book. The school has also purchased a set of stickers, which are given to the children when they have successfully completed one of the key objectives.

87. Although the assessment procedures and arrangements are extensive, as yet, they do not provide a sufficiently clear picture of how well children are achieving to properly guide planning or help pupils know what they need to do next. Data analysis across the school is not as informative as it could be and pupils' self-knowledge of where they are and what they need to do next is not as pronounced as in many schools.

88. Mathematics is well led by an experienced, well-qualified subject leader. Her enthusiasm and commitment is having a positive impact on the development of the subject. Well targeted training to raise subject knowledge is already helping to raise standards. The school's improvement planning ensures resources are targeted at agreed priorities. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory, with enough equipment etc to properly resource the implementation of the Numeracy Strategy. The Link Governor for Numeracy provides valuable support by visiting the school weekly and observing lessons. The school recognises the need to establish more cross-curricular links with other subjects.

SCIENCE

89. Standards of attainment in science have fluctuated since the last inspection and the school has prioritised the subject as an area for improvement by targeting resources to raise standards. Pupils in the current year two had little opportunity to develop scientific skills and understanding in

their foundation year so started in Year 1 at a low base. Sound progress so far sees them still operating at below average levels but generally catching up in their current classes. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are achieving well in their current topics and particularly in Year 3 are operating close to national standards in them. However, potentially higher attainers are not being stretched in most classes and the current four year cycle of topics in Key Stage 2 means that older pupils' knowledge and understanding of the topics taught in Years 3 and 4 is weak. Hence standards in Year 6 are below average though current work is sound. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress except when they miss science for work in other areas.

90. Years 1 and 2 pupils learn to recognise and classify the properties of materials. Through close observation of types of metals they are able to distinguish between brass, aluminium and iron. Whilst discussing the sample of iron, one pupil refers to what he learned about iron during an earlier visit to a folk museum. In studies of themselves pupils collect information such as eye colour or favourite foods and present these findings in block graphs. Work on healthy lifestyles shows an understanding of the benefits of eating plenty of fruit and vegetables.

91. In Year 3, pupils continue to develop their understanding of nutrition and growth. They write down what they know about teeth and identify different types. Having been told before the mid term break that teeth were to be studied some pupils made time to research the subject and were able to identify the types of teeth as molars, pre-molars, canine and incisors. Good advice for keeping teeth healthy is provided with suggestions such as avoiding sweets, brushing twice a day, using mouthwash, flossing and maintaining a healthy diet. In investigating the purpose of different teeth pupils determined that incisors help to cut and that molars are used to chew food. Year 4 pupils are able to describe the type of force they use for everyday activities such as pushing and pulling a toothbrush, pulling open a door or pulling curtains. They classify and organise a range of toys and objects according to the force required for them to move.

92. In an investigation on sound, Year 5 pupils learn that sounds are made when things vibrate. Their predictions as to the outcome when a drum with rice on the top was hit were sensible. There was a measure of surprised delight at the effect of a tuning fork being put into water where they hadn't predicted such a dramatic result. They understand and can describe how sound is created by an object vibrating, how sound waves travel through the air, how they are received by the eardrum and made sense of in the brain. Year six use specific language in sorting materials and describe cardboard as being opaque, tissue paper as translucent and glass as transparent. Further observations on the effect of a light source on a half filled bottle leads to a discussion on shadows where pupils demonstrate their understanding of how shadows are formed when light is blocked. They transfer this understanding to the movement of the earth, the sun and the changing profile of shadows over the course of a day. Boys and girls understand how constant and variable factors are applied to a fair test.

93. As shown above, pupils' science lessons help them to know about and understand life processes, the properties of materials and of physical processes. Investigative skills enable pupils to measure and record their observations. They make comparisons, identify patterns and relationships and offer explanations based on their knowledge and understanding. Most have a sound understanding of fair testing and are confident in making predictions. However, because each scientific topic is only covered once in years three to six, by the time pupils reach year six, half the information and understanding they gained is at least two years old and pitched at a much lower level than the levels of understanding expected of school leavers. Hence standards in those aspects of science are low at the top of the school.

94. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good overall in Key Stage 2. Most teachers' subject knowledge is secure and lesson planning clearly identifies learning objectives, activities and resources. In good lessons, clear and concise introductions and well chosen activities to reinforce teaching points enhance learning. Lesson objectives are clearly displayed and referred to throughout lessons making pupils aware of what they are learning. Good relationships generally exist between the teacher and pupils and expectations of behaviour are high. There is an enthusiasm for

science and pupils are eager to work on the tasks that are set. Boys and girls listen attentively and co-operate well when sharing materials and making decisions. They enjoy practical investigations and express their enjoyment when they are surprised by outcomes. Discussions are well conducted with pupils encouraged to express their opinion and discuss observations. Although activities are chosen to ensure that pupils are working at a range of levels, more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged. Praise and encouragement is used generously. Support staff and parental helpers provide valuable support to pupils and use their initiative during lessons by intervening discretely to keep pupils on task. The final part of lessons is used effectively in drawing together the key points, addressing any misunderstandings in learning that have become evident and in reinforcing lesson objectives.

95. In some less effective lessons the choice of scientific language is too advanced for the age group and outside the range of pupils' language experience. Although teachers have good relationships with pupils and a good awareness of some lively and chatty characters, some fidgety pupils are not always effectively dealt with. The use of resources is generally good but where pupils are given too many choices they become unclear of the categories by which to sort and classify. Pupils who are withdrawn from lessons are often disadvantaged when they return for the second half of the lesson. Although teachers explain the activity they miss learning opportunities and taking part valuable discussion. Assessments of pupils' ability are made at the beginning of units of work but it is unclear how this information supports further learning. The science targets that are written into books and used to monitor progress are useful where they indicate specific, understandable activities for improvement. Learning is supported by homework activities linked to work in the class.

96. Science displays, such as electricity displays with key words, advice on caring for teeth and pupil's work describing the relationship between the sun, earth and moon, are evident throughout the school and provide a good reference point for pupils as well as supporting learning. Good use is made of the school grounds for environmental studies on plants and insect life. The provision of resources is satisfactory, including the science and technology base, and supports the range of activity within the science curriculum.

97. Due to the number of recent staff changes science is being temporarily coordinated by the headteacher. Raising standards of pupil attainment and overall quality of science in the school is a target within the school development plan and a days training has been dedicated to the subject in the past year. The provision for higher attaining pupils was an issue in the last inspection that has not been satisfactorily resolved. In Key Stage 1 for instance, over the previous two years, the percentage of higher attaining pupils has been very low and in this year no boys reached the higher level. Good use is made of exemplar planning available from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority which ensures that work provided is effective in meeting the needs of most pupils. It caters satisfactorily for below average pupils but, because it has not been developed, it is not providing sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. Although the programme of study is covered there is a lack of depth and extension to challenge these pupils.

98. Priorities for a new co-ordinator would be to:

- Audit the programmes of study across the school to ensure they are being covered in sufficient depth and detail.
- Review curriculum provision for able pupils and provide challenging investigative work and opportunities for pupils to plan and evaluate their own work.
- Review the programme of study at Key Stage 2 with consideration to introducing two-year cycles in order that themes are taught at an appropriate level to pupils in Years 3 and 4 and the programme repeated at the appropriately higher level for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

ART AND DESIGN

99. Art has a low profile in the school and the attainment of most pupils in art and design is below national expectations. Work seen in Key Stage 1 included pupils working with a range of materials to make marks on paper with a variety of different mediums such as charcoal, graphite pencil, crayons and felt tips. In Key Stage 2 pupils looked at the work of Chagall, Picasso and Dali to illustrate dreams, they cut in half a digital photo of themselves and drew a 'dreamlike' character on the other

side. Some good examples of cross-curricular links with information technology and design and technology were observed in Key Stage 2. In a Year 4 lesson, digital images and patterns created in Art were transferred to the computer where they were distorted using a split frame technique. Year 6 children drew many different kinds of bags for making their own bag in Design and Technology.

100. The quality of teaching in art is satisfactory, classroom management is good and generally resources in classrooms are well organised. Good demonstrations of techniques to support learning effectively included a demonstration of shading in pencil in a Year 4 lesson. The lack of medium and long-term plans for Art provides insufficient guidance on learning outcomes. Such guidance is essential to support teachers in matching work to the pupil's abilities and in assessing them. There is no designated coordinator for art, and no clear policy or rolling programme of topic and projects that span the programme of study. No recent training has been provided for the staff to improve their knowledge and skills. As a result of this, little thought has been given to planning for progression in key skills as pupils move through the school. The lack of this support was a key factor in an unsatisfactory lesson taken by a teacher who lacks confidence and expertise in the subject.

101. Art displays around the school are mainly topic related with few specifically celebrating pupils' art work. In Year 3, children had drawn portraits of Henry VIII, in Year 4 pupils had designed posters of Second World War shelters and Year 5 children had a large display on Ancient Greece which included silhouettes of temples and vase designs. Art makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development through references to the work of various artists such as Picasso, Chagall, Dali and Van Gogh in Year 4. However, there is scope for exposing pupils to a much richer diet of the work of a much wider range of artists from a variety of cultures and times.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (DT)

102. During the period of the inspection it was only possible to observe DT being taught in a few year groups and judgements are based on discussions with pupils and staff, and analysis of work. Standards in design and technology have improved greatly since the last inspection when they were an issue. Pupils now have sufficient opportunities to work in all aspects of the subject in the new well planned and well resourced designated DT room.

103. By the end of Year 6 the pupils work with a variety of materials and components with some accuracy, paying attention to the quality of finish and to the function of the model. Pupils in Year 4 looked closely at materials for shadow puppets, examining what would happen when a puppet moved towards the light and what materials should be chosen to support movement. In a Year 6 class, pupils researched the appearance, function, cost and safety considerations when designing their own bag. They discussed and investigated the best design for handles to support the weight of their bag.

104. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Satisfactory planning covers all areas of the subject, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers now follow a comprehensive programme of study that covers all knowledge and skills areas across the school. The coordinator is keen to introduce cross-curricular links with other subjects and this has proved to be successful in Art and Science but still has some way to go in subjects such as history and geography.

105. Management of the subject is good and the new coordinator provides good support to her colleagues. The school has appropriately continued to identify DT as a focus for improvement and as a result standards are improving. The coordinator has audited teacher knowledge and understanding, and from this audit has planned training to increase their knowledge by providing specialist INSET. She has also introduced self-assessment procedures so that the pupils can evaluate their own work. Teachers are beginning to use this information to assess pupil progress against statements in the national programmes of study but this is still in its early stages. Resources have been audited, reorganised and enhanced. They are now good and well organised.

GEOGRAPHY

106. The school organises termly topic themes with either a history or geography bias. During the period of the inspection it was not possible to observe geography being taught in all year groups and judgements are based on discussions with pupils and staff, and scrutiny of work. The skills, knowledge and understanding of pupils in geography is generally below expectations but, since they start from a low base, the progress made by pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory.

107. In Key Stage 1 pupils study the area around the school and the local area. Maps, plans and photographs are used to develop fieldwork skills and pupils learn to locate places. They learn to distinguish between visitors who call at the school on a daily basis and those who visit less frequently. They list visitors such as the postman, milkman plumber and builder. Amongst those who are at school each day they include their headteacher, lunchtime staff, teachers and other children. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop their knowledge of the local environment through a study of Bridgwater and the Somerset Levels. A study of India provides the opportunity to learn about a less economically developed country. Older pupils at Key Stage 2 describe the location of Bridgwater, the county and local towns. Although they know local geographical facts such as the local River Parrett and the nearby Quantock Hills they are uncertain in naming neighbouring counties. Year 6 pupils are participating in a project entitled "Bags of Choice" involving eight local schools working in partnership with their local supermarket. The project involves a study of waste management, waste minimisation and visit to a local environmental centre. Boys and girls are developing a knowledge and understanding of environmental change and sustainable development through the project at local, national and a global level.

108. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Planning is sound and detailed, providing information on learning objectives, lesson activities and learning outcomes. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and use questions effectively to encourage them to think for themselves and acquire levels of independence. Pupils who are naturally reluctant to answer questions are kept involved through deliberate prompting. They behave sensibly in geography lessons, sitting quietly, listening carefully and keen to answer questions. Most work well in pairs and younger pupils share the task of cutting pictures from worksheets as they sort the categories of visitor. Ideas are expressed and shared willingly. Older pupils express a keen interest in their work and are responsive and enthusiastic. Lessons are well organised and managed, with pupils productively engaged. Expectations of behaviour are high and praise is used effectively to encourage and motivate pupils. Where appropriate, homework is used to support learning with Year 5 pupils, for example, they undertake a project based on a country of their own choice.

109. The coordinator has recently re-written the policy for geography. Her role is being developed to include monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of planning and teaching. Planned portfolios of pupils' work will support that development. The planning file shows that the programme of study has been appropriately allocated across the key stages. Good use is made of national exemplar plans. From the pupils' work and lessons observed there is further need to focus on geographical enquiry skills, providing reasons and explanations to support the good work that takes place in describing places and environments. Displays of children's work and a range of maps evident throughout the school provide a useful link with other subjects. For example, the information presented on modern Greece provides a good contrast with the history study on Ancient Greece. Few instances were observed of information and communication technology being used to support learning and this area has scope for development. Resources are satisfactory and good use is made of the local area through visits to places that support and enhance learning.

HISTORY

110. It was not possible to observe history lessons being taught in all year groups during the period of the inspection and judgements are based on discussions with pupils and staff and scrutiny of work. Working from a low base, the skills, knowledge and understanding of pupils in history are below national expectations.

111. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to distinguish between different ways of life at differing times in history. They learn how toys were different in the past, how seaside holidays have changed and about

the life of Florence Nightingale. Learning is often supported by visits to museums and by visitors in school. When studying the Great Fire of London, a curator from a local museum visited classes in period costume, dressed as a notable local character of the time and brought with him a number of everyday artefacts for children to handle. Pupils were intrigued when handling pewter mugs, horn beakers and wooden plates, and they made comparisons with objects with which they are familiar. Further comparisons between two periods of time are made in studying aspects of life and everyday objects in Victorian England. Boys and girls learn, for example, that a Victorian washing day involved the use of the dolly, washboard and considerable scrubbing and recorded their findings in pictures and writing. When asked how they find out about the past they knew they could get further information from books, from the computer or by visiting a museum. In remembering events from a recent museum visit pupils recalled that people used to bath in wooden tubs, toilets were outside of the house, candles were used instead of electricity and that they would be smacked with a ruler for being naughty at school.

112. Older pupils study life in Tudor times and begin to understand what it would have been like to be either rich or poor. They are aware that food was salted to preserve it, that spices were added to conceal the decay and that teeth were often black because of the poor diet. Whilst learning about the World War II, they discuss the reasons for children being evacuated and relate how they might feel in similar circumstances. Many were able to understand that some parents would not let their children go because they were afraid of losing them and of being separated. They express empathy for the evacuees and, having voted whether or not they would prefer to have been evacuated, they were mostly in favour and felt it would be preferable to being bombed. Older pupils discussing life in Victorian times identify features of change which include technology and fashion. Equality for girls and the improvements in schooling were also thought to be important.

113. Standards of teaching are good across the school. Lessons are well prepared and planned. Resources and selected texts are appropriate to the subject and often capture the imagination of pupils. Discussions are well managed and where they include personal recollections, can absorb pupils and lead to worthwhile discussions. The behaviour of pupils is good and they show enthusiasm and interest in the topics. Most are willing to contribute to discussions and express views and opinions based on their own experience. They are attentive listeners and are able to re-call and sequence key events. Pupils learning about the Great Fire of London listened intently as the story unfolded and then asked sensible questions about the artefacts and clothing. Pupils are able to co-operate well with each other and are willing to share their ideas and resources. Lessons have a good pace and where noise exceeds acceptable levels pupils are quietly re-focused. Praise is open and explicit and corrections are quiet and discrete.

114. The coordinator is re-writing the subject policy and has plans outlining appropriate action for the coming year including monitoring and developing portfolios of work. Good links with outside agencies and visits and visitors to the school at both key stages are very effective in bringing learning to life. Detailed lesson plans are based upon the exemplar planning available from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. In undertaking an audit of time allocated to the subject, consideration needs to be given to ensuring that pupils receive their full entitlement to the full programme of study at Key Stage 2. In year 6, for example, the planning framework presented for the Victorian topic does not cover the full programme and is not planned to be taught at all this year due to the on-going environmental project. Few instances were observed where information and communication technology was used to support learning and development in this area would increase the range of learning opportunity for pupils. The provision of resources is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

115. The new school computer suite and an associated focus on training is having a significant effect on school standards. Pupils in almost all classes are achieving well and the standards of attainment in the younger classes are in line with national expectations. However, older pupils who did not receive the benefit of all the very significant improvements in provision until recently are still catching up in most aspects of the subject. Boys and girls are making good progress particularly in the Early Years where attainment is good.

116. Boys and girls learn and develop a good range of computer skills throughout the comprehensive programme of planned activity as they progress through the school. Basic keyboard and mouse skills are consolidated in the early years in the school and the pupils learn to log on and off the system and to access and save their work. In a Reception Class the pupils learnt how to dress a teddy, using these basic skills, and in a Year 2 lesson, pupils accessed the Dazzle programme to create pictures in the style of Picasso. Boys and girls in Years 3 and 4 used and built on the skills learnt previously. In a Year 4 class, the children had digital portrait pictures on screen and learnt how to split, reverse and rotate the images. In a Year 3 class the children used 'Compose World' to create Tudor music. To complete this task, they learnt how to select and control sound. In a Year 5 class pupils focused on spreadsheets and learnt how to move cells, enter text and save and in a Year 6 class pupils linked text and images working towards presenting a single multimedia presentation. Almost all the ICT observed during the inspection took place in the suite and, with a few exceptions, much less use was made of the standalone computers in the classrooms but a good example came when Year 4 pupils used a history compact disc to search for information about evacuees.

117. The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory throughout the school and sometimes very good as noted in the teaching section. Most teachers maintain good pace to lessons and children happily work individually or in pairs on the computers, supported by their teachers as necessary. Pupils' attitude when working with computers is good and they enjoy working in the ICT Suite. When they work in pairs there is good co-operation, problems are discussed sensibly and tasks are shared. For example in a Year 2 class one partner drew the image and the other partner filled it in using colour, explaining menus and using toolbars, and asking questions when they were uncertain. In almost all lessons observed pupils were busy, enthusiastic and motivated. The exception was a year six lesson where, partly through lack of specific expertise and confidence on the part of the teacher, many pupils were unable to complete the task of linking text and pictures to create a multi-media presentation. As a consequence, behaviour deteriorated and the pace of learning for all but the few the teacher was concentrating on slowed to a crawl.

118. Some good examples of using information technology across the curriculum were noted but this is an area for development. In a very good art lesson, the teacher told the class that in their next ICT lesson they would be extending the ideas they had been recording manually by using a graphics programme. Year 3 children used music software to compose Tudor style music to complement their history topic.

119. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and has worked hard to ensure appropriate in service training for the school staff. She has audited and enhanced school resources, providing a good range of software and accessories across the school. All the teaching staff have received external and internal training towards National Qualifications. The School Improvement Plan which identifies further development of the subject, includes consolidating the gains made this year with teaching and learning.

MUSIC

120. Since the last inspection and until recently there has been a lack of leadership and expertise in music in the school. With some staff also lacking confidence, the subject has had a lower profile than other subjects, resulting in less than satisfactory provision, even in the time allocated to teaching the subject. Inspection evidence from observation of a small sample of lessons, a reception to Year 2 singing session and music associated with assemblies indicated that standards in music are close to average at the end of Key Stage 1, but are below average by the end of Key Stage 2. Since the arrival of the new subject leader many more children are involved in musical activities outside the classroom, both playing recorders and singing. For example, the well attended school choir is flourishing. As a result of this additional provision standards among these children are often higher.

121. Pupils develop their composing, performing and listening skills as they move through the school. In Year 1 pupils pass a beanbag around and make a short or a long sound when the music

stops. They use their listening skills well to distinguish between the sounds different fireworks make. In singing practice for the younger classes pupils sing well and enthusiastically include actions. In Year 4 pupils are able use body percussion in time to the beat of a rap. They are beginning to understand simple musical notation and are able to distinguish between different four beat rhythms. The oldest juniors listen to two contrasting pieces of music: The Ride of the Valkyries by Wagner and Pure Shoes by All Saints and are able to jot down appropriate words in a mind map of what the music makes them think of.

122. In the three lessons observed teaching was satisfactory in two and very good in the other. Where it was very good the teacher had high subject knowledge, which she used effectively by making telling teaching points throughout the lesson. This was conducted at a brisk pace and included an appropriate mix of information, demonstration and practical activities. In the satisfactory lessons the pace of learning was slower and less was expected of the pupils. Resources available are used well, and all pupils are encouraged to participate. In the lessons observed most pupils were enthusiastic in music and relished the opportunity to both compose and perform, and this was equally true of both boys and girls. Pupils sing well in assemblies and are given the opportunity to perform in productions at Christmas. Appropriate links are made with other subjects in the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils were encouraged to listen to two contrasting pieces of music to help design a float for the Bridgwater carnival and in Year 4, pupils composed a sound picture about the Blitz.

123. The school appointed a very enthusiastic music specialist at the beginning of the term because they recognised the need to raise standards in music. She has made many changes in a very short period and has already produced a draft music policy. This recognises the need to develop teachers' knowledge and confidence, and to support this by providing an up to date scheme of work, which the school lacks at present. The school is in the process of trialling Music Express scheme, which is matched to national guidance. She has carried out an audit of the instruments available and has purchased new equipment to meet the curricular demands of the new scheme. These include a range of musical instruments from different cultures (e.g guiro, agogo and rain stick). Resources for music are now good, stored and labelled appropriately and are much more accessible. The subject leader is beginning to assess pupils' attainment against set objectives to help monitor progress, but this is still in the very early stages. She makes good use of her subject knowledge by teaching two other classes for music, as well as her own, and by leading a weekly session for the youngest pupils singing together. In other ways she has already begun to raise the profile of music very effectively in the school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)

124. Although pupils perform well in some areas of the physical education curriculum, particularly games, overall standards are average in both key stages. This is a broadly similar judgement to that made in the last inspection. There is little difference in standards between boys and girls.

125. As pupils progress through the school they consolidate and extend their skills in PE. In a dance lesson Year 1 pupils demonstrate curly and flat shapes and move in keeping with the rhythm and mood of the music. They 'scuttle sideways' and have 'sneaky looks' like the crabs in 'Commotion in the Ocean', showing empathy with the creatures and their movements. Year 3 pupils perform the first movements of a dance from the Tudor period, while in invasion games pupils control and dribble the ball with a hockey stick. In Year 4 pupils perform a range of movements in gymnastics to create a sequence, while in older classes the sequences are more refined and include a variety of shapes. Pupils are encouraged to use their increasing subject knowledge to evaluate their efforts.

126. Boys and girls, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. They have a positive attitude to the subject and nearly all participate fully and enjoy the opportunity to take

part in physical activity. Pupils work hard and show obvious pleasure during their physical education lessons. Usually, they enter the hall in good order and quickly become engaged in purposeful activities. Boys and girls respond vigorously to warm-up exercises. Behaviour is almost always good, although occasionally the poor behaviour of a few slows the pace of learning. Pupils share the use of apparatus fairly and co-operate well in team games. They learn well and make the best use of the limited space in the cramped and noisy hall; however the opportunity for vigorous movement is severely limited by the size of the hall.

127. Overall the teaching of PE is good. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, while in the juniors, teaching was good in two lessons and very good in two others. In the very good lessons teachers had good subject knowledge, high expectations and planning was thorough, ensuring a good balance between direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to practise and explore movements. In satisfactory lessons teachers lacked confidence and made fewer teaching points to improve performance. They tended to be over reliant on the use of commercially produced tapes. However, in many lessons pupils are encouraged to improve and refine skills at a good pace with suitable expectations of their performance. A good feature of most lessons is the use of demonstration to share pupils' work and to illustrate where the work is good or, indeed, needs improving. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own and other pupils' performance. Most teachers use the correct terminology when talking about the pupils' work.

128. The PE curriculum covers all areas of activities identified in the National Curriculum. Additionally the school provides a good range of extra curricular activities for older pupils at different times through the year including football, netball, cricket, rounders, athletics, table-tennis, tennis, dance and ball skills. The school's football, netball, table tennis, rounders and cricket teams participate fully and successfully in local tournaments and competitions. Indeed last year the football team won the local league and cup competitions, despite the fact that the school has to play all its fixtures away from home. The oldest children have the opportunity to take part in some adventurous activities during the residential school trip to Osmington Bay.

129. The new subject leader is keen to further develop the subject, particularly in ensuring the curriculum complies with requirements of national guidance. In response to a survey of staff views he has already written an action plan detailing in order the priorities for development. He recognises that there are gaps in some teachers' subject knowledge, particularly in gymnastics and dance and that there had been little monitoring of standards in the past. Accommodation for PE is unsatisfactory. The school has a large hard area adjacent to the school, but has little grassed area. The subject leader is exploring the possibility of using a local secondary school's all weather facilities in future. Neither hall is suitable for large classes to take part in vigorous activity. The school makes light of these difficulties, but it is clear the problems inherent in the building have a negative impact on learning. Otherwise, resources for physical education are generally good, although the PE mats are showing their age and need replacing.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

130. Overall standards in religious education are below those expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. However there is evidence, from lesson observations, that standards in Year 3 and 5 are better and match those expected because the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus are actually being taught in these years.

131. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the concept of belonging to a family and understand that Christians have their babies baptised in church. However, they remember very little about stories from the Bible other than Christmas and although during the inspection one class of pupils was observed looking at the Torah, a sacred book for people of the Jewish faith, pupils were not able to recall this lesson later in the week.

132. Year 6 pupils understand some of the beliefs and practices of Muslims, which they recall from lessons in Year 5. For example they explain where and how Muslims pray and know that their holy book is called the Qu'ran. Pupils in Year 3 retell the creation story from the Bible, know that rules in society are associated with the Ten Commandments and compose some of their own prayers. They

are beginning to understand the main events of the Christian Year. In Year 5, pupils talk confidently about the nature and existence of God in different religions, such as Islam, Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity. They are beginning to find out about how and where different religious groups worship.

133. Religious education teaching is unsatisfactory overall. Many teachers lack confidence and secure subject knowledge and this has a negative impact on pupils' learning. Few teachers are using the Locally Agreed syllabus in enough detail to ensure that religious education and not personal, social and health education is being taught. There is little recorded evidence in pupils' books and in discussions, few were able to recall any knowledge gained in lessons. A small number of lessons were judged as satisfactory during the inspection but these were judged more for their personal, social and health education content rather than their religious education content. Two lessons were judged to be good or better. In these lessons the teachers had good subject knowledge and the lessons clearly had the required religious content. Resources were well organised to support learning. For example, in one lesson pupils were provided with a good range of books and a number of questions to enable them to do their own research on how and where people belonging to different religious groups, worship. Pupils organised themselves extremely well; allocating tasks to different members of their group and by the end of the lesson all had gained sound knowledge of some of the practices in the religion they were asked to find out about. Behaviour management is good and pupils are interested in their work.

134. The new coordinator has appropriately identified the need for staff training to enable them to become more confident to teach religious education. An outline plan of topics uses the units from the Locally Agreed Syllabus but there is no scheme of work to support teachers in planning their lessons, in particular to ensure that the religious elements remain the main focus of the lessons. There are no assessment procedures for religious education. Resources are satisfactory and the school has access to more resources through the county loans service. The headteacher has started to build good links with the local Methodist church but has also identified the need for pupils to visit places of worship of other faiths.