

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **CHARLTON MACKRELL C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Charlton Mackrell, Somerton

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123746

Headteacher: Mrs E Crouch

Reporting inspector: Mrs S Chesters  
23196

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> July 2002

Inspection number: 250083

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bonfire Lane Charlton Mackrell Somerton Somerset
Postcode:	TA11 7BN
Telephone number:	01458 223329
Fax number:	01458 224024
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Sue Cooper
Date of previous inspection:	10 <sup>th</sup> – 14 <sup>th</sup> November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Sue Chesters 23196	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities English as an additional language English Science Information and communication technology Geography History French Physical education	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? Attainment and achievement How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? Leadership of HT/SMT, effectiveness of governors
Brian Jones 9542	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Attitudes, behaviour, personal development/ relationships & attendance How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well is the school led and managed? Financial management and organisation, best value principles Staffing, accommodation and resources
Sylvia Gatehouse 26945	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Special educational needs Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Music Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities? Provision of learning opportunities and statutory curriculum How well does the school cultivate pupils' personal development including SMSC?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Charlton Mackrell Church of England Primary School is in the village of Charlton Mackrell, about three miles to the east of Somerton in the county of Somerset. It educates pupils aged from 4 to 11 years. There are 79 pupils on roll. This is about the same number as at the last inspection. The school serves a mixed area with most of the pupils coming from the twin villages of the Charltons. No pupils claim free school meals. However, there are families who are eligible but choose not to apply for their entitlement. There are no pupils from ethnic minority groups. One pupil speaks English as an additional language but is not at an early stage of English acquisition. Thirteen per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, which is below average. Their difficulties range from moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties to speech and communication difficulties. One pupil has a formal Statement of Special Educational Need, which is average. Attainment on entry to the school is above the county average. There is a high level of migration in and out of the school in all year groups (average in Years 3 to 6 is 36 per cent). The week before the inspection the school celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

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

This is a very effective school which serves its community very well and of which the community is justifiably proud. The very good quality teaching, the very good curriculum and very good leadership and management ensure that pupils achieve high standards. The school gives very good value for money.

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

- It achieves high standards in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- Standards at 11 are well above average in music, history and French and above average in most other subjects.
- The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school and ensures that pupils achieve very well.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good. All staff and governors share a vision that reflects the school's aims outstandingly well. Their commitment to improve is excellent.
- The curriculum is very good. It offers additional subjects, such as French, to a high standard and excellent extra-curricular opportunities. The provision for children under the age of five is very good, as is the provision for the pupils with special educational needs.
- The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal awareness. This results in excellent attitudes to school, excellent relationships throughout the school and the pupils' excellent personal development.

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

- There are no major areas for improvement.

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

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

The school has improved considerably since it was last inspected in 1997 even though it was in a strong position then. Standards in English, mathematics and science are all higher than they were. Teaching was effective, now it is very effective. All the issues raised in the last inspection report have been very well addressed. The provision for information and communication technology has improved significantly and this has resulted in rapidly improving standards for all pupils. The curriculum has been overhauled and is now very good. It has many strengths, including a high focus on the arts, excellent extra-curricular activities and the inclusion of French for all pupils. Health and safety procedures are good. Teachers plan carefully to ensure that multi-cultural elements are included wherever possible and this has resulted in all pupils being very well prepared for life in a diverse society.

## STANDARDS

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

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

**Key**

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

*Caution is needed in interpreting the results of National Curriculum assessments because the number of pupils in each year group is small.*

The table shows the results for pupils of Year 6 who have now left the school. Standards are in line with the average in English and mathematics and above average in science. When compared with similar schools, that is those having up to 8 per cent free school meals, the results are below average in English and mathematics and average in science. It is difficult to make valid comparisons with these results because not only is the year group small but nearly a third of the pupils had special educational needs and one tenth of pupils did not start their schooling in the reception class. Thus, the statistics are unreliable. Indications are that this year's (2002) results show a continued upward trend.

Inspection findings show that standards in the current Year 6 are above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills are particularly high and well above average. Standards in history, music and French are well above average. In art and design, design and technology, geography and physical education, standards are above average. Standards in information and communication technology are average. Pupils exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education.

In the current Year 2, standards are above average in English, mathematics, science and all other subjects, including French. They exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning. Across the school, all groups of pupils, including those on the special educational needs register and those identified as gifted and talented, achieve very well. This is because of the very good quality teaching and the very interesting curriculum, which challenges pupils of all abilities very effectively.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. All pupils show most appropriate attitudes to their work, to members of staff and to school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. At playtimes and lunchtimes, as well as in lessons, behaviour is very good. This has a very beneficial effect on learning.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils relate outstandingly well to adults and to each other. They share ideas profitably and work sensibly together. They enjoy taking responsibility for jobs around the school and are very keen to help with routine tasks.
Attendance	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are very punctual. This contributes very positively to the high standards that they achieve.

Pupils take great interest in their lessons. They work hard and are happy. They understand very well the effects of their actions on others and show great respect for other people's feelings, values and beliefs. Older pupils are mature, show very good initiative and take personal responsibility very well.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching during the inspection ranged from good to excellent. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning were very good. Eighty-seven per cent of teaching seen was very good or better. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught very skilfully and are learning very rapidly. Literacy and numeracy are taught very well. Very effective support assistants work alongside the teachers. This makes a significant contribution to the high standards achieved. Teachers ensure that the pace of learning is very good in all lessons. Thus, pupils are interested in their work and eager to complete tasks that they are given. A major strength of the teaching is the way in which staff have an excellent range of strategies to keep pupils motivated and behaving well. They teach the basic skills in all subjects consistently very well and have very high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. As a result, the pupils know exactly what is expected of them and they work very hard. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and receive good quality support from the learning support assistants. Hence, pupils make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils of all prior attainments and from all backgrounds are fully included in all lessons and make progress. The school has identified its gifted and talented pupils and offers them challenging work in lessons.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a very rich and full curriculum for all its pupils. It offers very good extra opportunities, such as French. Extra-curricular activities are excellent.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Charlton Mackrell is a very caring school where pupils with special educational needs are very welcome and staff help them to achieve very well. The school has taken a strong stance on educational inclusion, and pupils with special educational needs have full access to all activities and subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school has a very positive ethos and provides very well for pupils' personal, social and health education. It makes excellent provision for pupils' moral and social development. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development are guided very successfully, including the provision for multi-cultural education. The school prepares its pupils very well for life in a diverse society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	All staff know and understand the pupils very well. They care for them very sensitively. Child protection procedures are good.

Parents make a very significant impact on their children's learning in school. The school involves parents very well in its day-to-day life. Particularly impressive is the way in which homework is used to support learning in lessons. Teachers value greatly the work done at home and parents are very supportive in this.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. All staff and governors share the headteacher's vision for the success of the school. They show outstanding commitment to reflecting the school's aims and values in all of its work. Their desire to raise standards even further and their drive to succeed is excellent.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors understand very well the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are fully involved in all of its work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school has a very clear view of its work and analyses very effectively what works well and why. Procedures for monitoring teaching and learning are very good and are proving effective.
The strategic use of resources	The systems for financial planning are very good. The school uses its available resources very efficiently. It applies the principles of best value very well.

The school makes very good use of the buildings and grounds. However, the mobile classrooms are beginning to show their age and need constant attention. There is a very good number of well-qualified teaching and support staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. Resources are good and staff use them well to enhance pupils' learning.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Leadership and management of the school are good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very small number of parents feel the school does not work closely with them and feel that they would like more information about their children's progress.</li> </ul>

Sixteen parents attended the meeting with the registered inspector before the inspection and 38 questionnaires were returned. The inspection judgements agree wholeheartedly with the positive views of parents and find that the school works well with parents and provides good information about pupils' progress.

## PART B: COMMENTARY

### HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

#### The school's results and pupils' achievements<sup>1</sup>

##### *Foundation Stage<sup>2</sup>*

1. The majority of children start in the reception class with levels of attainment that are above the county averages for the age. This is confirmed by the initial assessments conducted with these young children. They make rapid progress in the reception class in all areas of learning. This is because of the very good teaching that they receive. Most children in this year's reception class have exceeded the goals<sup>3</sup> set for the end of the Foundation Stage. This represents very good achievement.

##### *Years 1 and 2*

2. Results in the 2001 national tests and tasks show that standards for the 7-year-olds were well above average in reading and above average in writing. In mathematics, results were very high and in the top 5 per cent in the country. Indications are that the results in 2002 follow a similar pattern. When compared with similar schools<sup>4</sup>, these results are well above average in reading, average in writing and very high (in the top 5 per cent) in mathematics. Over the past four years, standards in all subjects have fluctuated, although the overall trend follows the national upward pattern. The fluctuations reflect the varying size of each year group, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each year group and the high level of migration in most year groups. There is no significant difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls.
3. Current inspection findings judge that, by the end of Year 2, standards in writing, mathematics and science are above average. Standards of speaking and listening and reading are well above average. In art and design, design and technology, French, geography, history, information and communication technology, music and physical education standards are above average. In religious education, standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards have been maintained in music and physical education since the last inspection. In all other subjects there has been a steady rise in standards over the past four years and standards have moved from average to above. There has been a significant improvement in speaking and listening and in reading where standards have moved from average to well above average. In information and communication technology, they have risen from below average to above. These improvements are due to the very good teaching and to improvements in the curriculum, which enables pupils of all abilities to achieve very well.

##### *Years 3 - 6*

4. The results achieved by 11-year-olds in national tests in 2001 were average in English and mathematics and above average in science. When compared with similar schools, these results are below average in English and mathematics and average in science. The rate of improvement over the past four years in the national tests for 11-year-olds has fluctuated. This is because of the small and variable numbers in each year group, the variation in the percentage of pupils with special educational needs and the high level of migration that exists in some year groups. For example, while the average level of

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the report in all references to standards and trends, it must be noted that this is a very small primary school and the number of pupils within each year group is small.

<sup>2</sup> Foundation Stage: the new curriculum for children under six, which started in September 2000, which replaces the desirable outcomes.

<sup>3</sup> QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals' for children in this stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of six. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and creative development.

<sup>4</sup> Schools with up to eight per cent of pupils entitled to free school meals.

migration from Years 3 to 6 is 36 per cent, the rate in the current Year 6 is 64 per cent and in Year 4 it is 22 per cent. These figures make it very difficult to compare year on year and precludes any such comparison. There is no significant difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls.

5. Current inspection findings show that standards in English, art and design and physical education have been maintained since the last inspection and are above average, although standards in speaking and listening and reading in English are well above average. In mathematics, science, design and technology, and geography they have risen and are now above average. In history, music and French, standards have also improved and are now well above average. Standards in religious education exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
6. There has been a significant improvement in information and communication technology since the last inspection, when standards were below average. Standards in Year 6 are now average. Standards in Years 3 to 6 are rising rapidly and Years 3 to 5 are on target to exceed the expectations of the National Curriculum by the time they reach Year 6. However, there has not been enough time within the improved provision for Year 6 to reach above average standards.
7. The improvement in all subjects is linked to the very good teaching and also to the way in which staff plan links across the curriculum. This enables pupils to take the skills and knowledge learned in one subject and to apply them in other subjects. Thus pupils do not study one subject in isolation and this helps them make sense of their learning, with consequent very good achievement.

#### *Across the school*

8. Pupils with special educational needs reach good standards in their work across all subjects because they follow a programme of study to meet their aptitude. Particularly impressive is the progress made by those pupils with moderate learning difficulties. All pupils on the register regularly meet the targets set for them in their individual education plans. They are supported very effectively in lessons by learning support assistants, who work in very close partnership with class teachers to meet pupils' specific learning needs. This enables them to achieve very well.
9. The school's focus on teaching the basic skills, needed for pupils to succeed in the tasks set, ensures that pupils achieve very well. The school sets itself realistic targets and regularly exceeds them. It works hard to raise standards in all subjects. The very well balanced and relevant curriculum, throughout the school, ensures that pupils achieve very well during their time in school. This, together with the high expectations that teachers have of the pupils, has a positive effect on raising standards.

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

10. Pupils' attitudes to school and their interest in activities are excellent. All parents answering the questionnaire agree that their children like the school. Pupils are very proud of their school. They present their work with pride. On the first day of the inspection, every pupil took part in a performance of music written to celebrate the school's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The motto inscribed on the walls all those years ago was: 'Hear Instruction and Be Wise'. This has been incorporated into a song for the school, which pupils sang wholeheartedly. They live up to it. Their attitudes were very good or better in more than three-quarters of the lessons observed. They are very keen to answer teachers' questions. They take a lively and intelligent part in discussions. They work independently. They are fascinated to trace the history of the community and of their school. Older pupils have researched the school's log books, which go back into the

1860s. A Year 1 pupil brought in his grandfather's farming records, in a magnificent book with marbled edges.

11. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are eager to win praise and rewards, knowing that good behaviour can win them 'Golden Time'. Teachers establish high expectations of behaviour on the weekly coach trips to swimming lessons. This quickly feeds through to other out-of-school activities. Parents say that the garden and outdoor play equipment give pupils 'plenty to do' during the break times. This has a positive effect on their behaviour. The few pupils with behaviour difficulties respond well to good management by teaching and non-teaching staff. The school has not excluded any pupils at any time in the recent past. Assemblies and break times are orderly. Pupils welcome visitors with courtesy and friendship. They show great respect for the school environment. The school is free from oppressive behaviour. Pupils believe firmly that 'bullying is not on' and there is no racist language. Boys and girls work and play harmoniously together.
12. Relationships are excellent. Pupils work together in pairs or groups, and share resources very efficiently. They build up friendships across the different age groups. During a wet playtime, older pupils quickly came to the youngest class and organised board games and construction equipment for them. Some Year 6 pupils showed Year 2 how to play chess. In the playground, older pupils are considerate and take good care of the Foundation Stage children. Pupils are very aware of the effect of their actions on others. Some pupils join the school when new families arrive at the nearby naval base. The other pupils play a big part in the inclusion of newcomers into the life of the school and the village. They quickly befriend them and invite them home.
13. Pupils show excellent personal responsibility. The 'Friday meeting' is like a school council in larger schools. However, because numbers are small, all pupils at this school can put forward their own ideas and concerns. Pupils are responsible for keeping their classroom tidy and looking after the resources. Two or three Year 6 pupils serve as monitors each half term. Increasingly, pupils are taking responsibility for their learning. They set targets for themselves, writing about the things they are 'working hard to improve.' Pupils collect successfully for charities. Each summer Year 6 pupils go on a residential visit. This year, their visit to the rugged landscape of Exmoor had a major effect in building up their maturity and self-confidence.
14. Pupils with special educational needs have excellent attitudes to school. For example, one pupil arrived in school very early to continue working at the computer. Their behaviour is very good and they show the utmost respect for others' feelings and beliefs. They develop excellent relationships with other pupils and demonstrate their initiative and sense of responsibility keenly, for example in distributing hymn books at assemblies.
15. Attendance is very good. Last year the figure was 96.3 per cent. This is very high in comparison with other schools. In the latest return, up to May 2002, attendance has risen to 96.9 per cent. The school has achieved a significant increase since the last inspection. There are very few unauthorised absences. Punctuality is very good. Pupils arrive on time and make a prompt and eager start each morning.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. This results in pupils learning very effectively. Teaching is consistently good or better. During the inspection 15 lessons, or parts of lessons, were observed. Twelve of these were very good or excellent. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when the overall quality was good. The headteacher monitors the quality of teaching and learning carefully and this contributes to the maintenance of the high standards of teaching. All staff work exceptionally well as a team and support each other most efficiently. Thus, the very good quality of teaching results consistently in very good achievement by all groups of pupils. It also contributes very successfully to the personal development of all pupils as teachers encourage them to take responsibility for their own actions and learning.
17. The teaching of literacy in English lessons and numeracy in mathematics lessons is of very high quality. The teachers have worked hard to implement both strategies, which they have done very effectively. Interesting texts and a good range of carefully selected big books, guided reading texts and relevant reading books have ensured that literacy lessons are challenging and relevant to the needs of the pupils, whatever their ability or background. Numeracy lessons encourage pupils successfully to engage and focus on improving their mental agility.
18. The teaching of literacy and numeracy very successfully supports learning in other curriculum areas. For example, in science lessons the pupils have the opportunity to record the results of their experiments and explain what the results show. Teachers promote very good cross-curricular links and, in this way, the pupils see the relevance of their learning and the way it develops. They use information and communication technology more and more effectively as a tool to support all subjects. For example, they use the Internet to find information for various topic work.
19. Pupils with special educational needs receive very good teaching throughout the school. Teachers plan work specially to meet their particular needs in English and mathematics. In lessons, teachers organise their time so that they can give pupils with special educational needs a few minutes of their attention to ensure that pupils know what their task is and, therefore, get started without delay, and with confidence. Classroom assistants are very well briefed and their contribution towards lessons is of a very high standard. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in lessons because of the very high quality of attention that they receive.
20. The teaching of the children in the Foundation Stage is consistently very good. All staff have a very clear understanding of the needs of young children. Their enthusiastic, supportive and patient approach enables the children to be confident in their learning and, therefore, they achieve very well. The very good planning takes into account the Early Learning Goals for children in the reception year. Careful planning ensures that the needs of all children are extremely well met. Staff work hard to develop a wide range of activities, which help to promote very good learning at a very rapid pace.
21. Teachers, throughout the school, have very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They use the correct technical terms and vocabulary to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of each subject. This is particularly evident in English, mathematics and science, where technical language is used accurately, not just in the teaching but also in the very good quality displays around school. Teachers use their expertise well; for example, in physical education and music. This use of specialist teaching contributes very effectively to the high standards that the pupils achieve.
22. The teachers place a significant level of demand upon individuals, to ensure that all are fully involved. Thus, pupils listen carefully to the very good instructions they receive and

- know exactly what they are expected to do. They work very hard and learn very well. This not only results in very good pace in lessons but also in consistently very good achievement by all pupils.
23. Teachers' planning is very good. In literacy and numeracy, the teachers plan very closely to the structured frameworks. Planning is tailored most effectively to include all the levels of attainment and all age groups in the classes. This means all pupils, whatever their ability, are challenged most suitably and fully included in all lessons. For example, teachers have identified pupils with particular gifts and talents in a number of subjects. They ensure these pupils are pushed hard and have good opportunities to extend their particular talents.
  24. Teachers' expectations of the pupils and their work are very good. Teachers question pupils well to establish what they know and understand and to help them think for themselves. All staff have extremely high expectations that pupils will behave well and work hard. Pupils live up to these expectations. Teachers consistently and constantly praise and encourage the pupils. They challenge them most effectively so that they give their best performances. This ensures that pupils are fully involved in their lessons, work very hard and concentrate very well. As a result, pupils achieve consistently very well.
  25. In all classes, teachers encourage the pupils to work independently. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. The mutual respect shown by teachers and pupils adds significantly to the quality of the work that the pupils produce and the way in which they learn. The pupils feel that their input is valued and this most effectively aids their personal development.
  26. Teachers manage the pupils outstandingly well. They constantly strive to find ways in which to reward good behaviour and work. Lessons are very well organised. Teachers use time and resources most effectively and, as a result, lessons move along at a very good pace. The learning support staff give very good, careful support to pupils and this enhances considerably all pupils' learning. They are much appreciated by the school as a very valuable resource.
  27. The quality of day-to-day assessment is good. It is mostly informal but, because the teachers know all of the pupils very well and liaise constantly between themselves, it is effective. Teachers mark pupils' work in a supportive manner, but evidence within the marking of what the pupils need to do next to improve is not always clear. Homework is used very well to supplement and support work done in class.

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

28. The school provides a very good curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. All statutory requirements are met and the school has embraced the principles of educational inclusion. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have access to all subjects and activities. The school has also improved its provision for information and communication technology and standards are rising in this subject. It has also developed its provision for pupils' multi-cultural development. These steps represent a considerable improvement in the curriculum since the time of the last inspection.
29. The school's curriculum is very broad. All subjects of the National Curriculum are offered. In addition, the school provides very good daily lessons in French for all year groups. The balance between the subjects is very good, although there is appropriate emphasis on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The curriculum is particularly relevant for the pupils in this rural school. They are thoroughly aware of the cultural features of

their locality; for instance, the school makes frequent use of the village church for a wide range of festivals and celebrations. The school has also raised pupils' awareness of other cultures and faiths in Britain by providing a selection of suitable artefacts for them to study. Visits are arranged to stimulate interest and enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of how others live, both in the present and in the past.

30. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Teachers plan lessons carefully to ensure that pupils receive tasks which suit their particular needs. They, and their support staff, work alongside these pupils in lessons such as mathematics to give a short time of extra support. This initial input enables pupils to tackle their work with confidence, imparting an increasing sense of independence. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. It follows the stepping stones that lead to the Early Learning Goals, providing children of this age with a firm base for their future learning.
31. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are now fully implemented and are having a positive effect on raising standards. A very good feature of the school's curriculum is the way in which teachers incorporate links between these two subjects and with other areas of study. This practice lends coherence to the pupils' experience and makes their learning much more meaningful. For example, while preparing to celebrate the school's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, pupils wrote letters to leading experts trying to find out all they could about the unique tiles that adorn the school building. This activity simultaneously united art, literacy, history and information and communication technology.
32. The school's provision for music and physical education is of a very high standard because of specialist teaching. Many pupils learn to play musical instruments, such as the flute, clarinet, percussion and violin, and all pupils from Year 3 learn to play the descant recorder and to read standard notation. Physical education lessons provide challenging activities every week. The school staff also use their own skills to very good effect, for example, in providing a very good art curriculum.
33. It is difficult to imagine a better range of extra-curricular activities than that which the school provides: this aspect of the curriculum is outstanding. Considering the small number of staff, extra-curricular provision is excellent and constitutes a significant strength of the school. The many and varied clubs are well attended by pupils and make a wonderful contribution to the curriculum and the ethos of the school. Visits out of school are extensive, ranging from day trips to a beach, a castle and a rural museum. Longer study trips away from home enable pupils to experience contrasting environments. All these activities not only enrich the curriculum, but also provide valuable opportunities for fostering pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem.
34. A great strength of this school is the very good way in which it promotes pupils' personal, social and health education. The entire school worked together to provide a weekend of music and drama for the local community to share in the celebration of the school's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Older and younger pupils work and play together harmoniously during the school day. Pupils with special educational needs receive sensitive and individual assistance to help raise their confidence and self-esteem. Assemblies encourage pupils' understanding of moral and social dilemmas, and there are weekly gatherings when pupils raise matters of concern to them for open discussion with all present. Healthy lifestyles are encouraged; for example, all bring wellingtons so that outdoor playtimes are not necessarily abandoned for a light spatter of rain. Visitors such as the school nurse come into school to raise pupils' awareness of health matters.
35. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection. Overall, this is judged to be very good. Collective worship makes a very good contribution to spiritual development. Teachers use music to create a suitable ethos

on these occasions. There are quiet moments for prayer and reflection, and pupils have opportunities to be inspired by learning about the lives of special people, such as St. Benedict or Sir Hubert Parry. The pupils show respect for visitors, listening carefully and showing interest in special resources, such as clothing worn by a monk. Regular visits to the local church are valuable occasions when pupils have the chance to experience its special atmosphere, and gain an understanding of the meaning of life.

36. Moral development is strongly promoted by teachers and staff, who set very good examples of care and respect for others. All listen attentively to pupils' contributions and respond positively, valuing their views. There are very good systems, such as the Friday assemblies and Golden Times when pupils can express their opinions. Pupils show that they have acquired values by reflecting thought for others in the community. For example, the youngest pupils discussed how they could preserve their village facilities, such as the post office for the good of all. They showed regret for the closure of the garage, which means that people have to travel elsewhere to buy petrol.
37. The very good relationships and the strong spirit of teamwork in the school's community set the tone for pupils' social development. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to work together, in pairs, groups and teams. The school orchestra shows an excellent spirit of teamwork, as they play and listen to each other while performing. Pupils take responsibility for the day-to-day routines, which help events run smoothly and efficiently. For instance, they organise the distribution of hymn books at assemblies. They use their initiative when they see the need to provide chairs, and clear them away safely afterwards. The many extra-curricular activities provide opportunities galore for pupils to work together collaboratively and fairly, for example the chess club and football teams. Regular contact with senior citizens is fostered through strawberry teas in the summertime and carol singing at Christmas.
38. Provision for cultural development is very good. Very good use is made of the locality. The school invites visitors who have special contributions to make to come into school, such as poets and musicians. Pupils' awareness of their own cultural heritage is heightened by visits to local places, such as Dorchester Museum, the Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton, and Bristol Docks. They enjoyed dressing up as Victorian children to experience what it was like to be at school in Victorian times. Younger pupils enjoyed a visit to Weymouth where they watched the traditional 'Punch and Judy' show and gained an understanding of the 'true meaning of sandwiches'. Teachers provide good opportunities to study the work of artists and musicians from other times, such as Picasso and Mozart. Most recently they experienced the special privilege of having a piece of music composed by Richard Mitchell for the school's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, with the title, 'Hear Instruction and Be Wise'.

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

39. The school's strong ethos ensures that it cares well for pupils. Care has improved significantly since the last inspection. A key issue in the previous report was a need to undertake a full health and safety review and risk assessment. The school has done this. It has a good policy for health and safety. A committee monitors the site regularly, reporting to the governing body. They follow the guidance of the local education authority inspection, carried out a year ago. They undertake risk assessments every term. There are two present concerns. Tiles on the roof of the main building are loose and ready to fall. There is no catch device to stop them falling into the playground. Some windows are cracked and need safety glass or film. The school has good arrangements for first aid. It keeps records and notifies parents if there is an injury. The headteacher is the designated liaison officer for child protection. She ensures that teaching and non-teaching staff are aware of requirements.

40. The school monitors pupils' learning well and gives good support to meet their academic needs. Assessment, and the way the school uses it, has improved since the previous report. Good systems to assess pupils' literacy and numeracy have led the way.
41. Reception children take the county baseline test early in the school year. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 take optional tests. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 take the national tests in the summer. They take a reading test earlier in the year. An unusual, useful practice is that all pupils from Year 2 upwards write a story at the start of the autumn term. The school analyses this information fully. Teachers set targets for individual pupils, for groups and for the whole class. The school uses assessment information as an integral part of its planning process. It achieves good inclusion of all pupils in lessons and extra-curricular activities. Pupils with special educational needs get very good support in reaching the targets on their individual education plans. The school provides very well for pupils with statements of special educational need. It lists gifted and talented pupils, recognising potential in a range of subjects. Notwithstanding all of these positive features, there is still scope for improvement. The school could extend its very good practice in English and mathematics to strengthen assessment in other subjects.
42. The school monitors pupils' personal development very well. Teachers know their pupils and their families, often over a period of many years. Pupils' progress in attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development feature prominently in the termly reports to parents. The annual reports give a detailed review of the child's personal progress. A report this year says that a pupil 'works hard, has a happy relationship with his peer group, and is always polite and friendly'.
43. The school provides very good support for pupils with special educational needs through extra help in lessons and through providing individual education plans, including targets which are reviewed termly. Parents are notified at an early stage when teachers are concerned about any pupil's performance, behaviour or progress so that steps can be taken swiftly to provide the necessary support.
44. The school supports pupils' personal development effectively. Year 6 pupils have plenty of opportunity to take on wider responsibilities, as monitors and in support of the youngest children around the school. All pupils have classroom responsibilities. Pupils take part enthusiastically in the wide range of sporting, musical and arts activities available at lunchtime and after school. The school's gifted and talented list includes sporting skills such as swimming, tennis and chess. The Year 6 residential visit has a very beneficial effect on pupils' self-confidence and maturity. A report says that a pupil 'responded well to the camp on Exmoor, enjoying everything and behaving beautifully'.
45. The school monitors attendance very well. The secretary uses the computer system expertly to show patterns of individuals and groups. She contacts parents if they do not give the reason for an absence. This has reduced unauthorised absences to the very low total of two sessions in the whole year. She keeps a record of late arrivals and this has encouraged a punctual start to lessons.
46. Procedures for behaviour and discipline are very good. Pupils respond positively to the chance to win Golden Time. They respect the sanctions. A Year 5 pupil said: 'It's not cool to lose Golden Time'. Teachers manage their classes very effectively in lessons. Because they know their pupils so well, they can lift pupils' interest and concentration when otherwise they might lag. This was evident in a music lesson at the end of a very full day after the anniversary celebration. Assistants give high quality support in class. At lunchtime, the two supervisors provide very good care in the outside areas. The school's ethos is very effective against bullying, harassment and other oppressive behaviour. It has strong procedures, even though these are rarely necessary.

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

47. Parents have a good opinion of the school. All 12 of the questions on the questionnaire have favourable responses. Parents particularly value the way in which the school helps their children become mature and responsible. A parent says: 'My child is happy and growing in confidence here'. There was concern from a minority of parents about the way the school works with them and the information that they receive about their children's progress. The inspection judgements are that the school works well with parents and provides good information about pupils' progress.
48. The school has very good links with parents. Teachers in turn do 'gate duty' at the end of one day each week. Parents take this chance to have a word informally with their child's class teacher. The school offers appointments after parents have received the written report each term. Parents of pupils with special educational needs take part in reviews of their individual education plans. Parents play a big part in the friends' association, which arranges fund-raising events. The funds pay for activities and equipment that add significantly to the quality of pupils' life at school. For example, the friends contribute £1,000 each year to the cost of coach travel to swimming. They bought 10 extra chess sets, enabling a very large team from Charlton Mackrell to compete against another local school. Pupils join in events, such as the seasonal bazaars, the garden teas and the Christmas party. These help develop pupils' social skills.
49. Parents get good information from the school. The school provides a short written report on progress in the autumn and spring terms. This is unusual, as most schools produce only one report per year. The main reports at the end of the summer term are well presented and informative. They cover in detail what each child knows and can do in English, mathematics and science. There are shorter comments on the other subjects. The reports also cover the child's personal development. However, they do not set targets consistently. A regular system would give parents clearer guidance on how they can help their child improve. For example, reports could include one target each for English, mathematics and science, or there could be a target setting section at the end of the report. Parents get frequent newsletters about the life at school. The friends' association also sends out newsletters about its activities. The governors' annual report and the prospectus are clear and easy to read. The prospectus meets statutory requirements. The governors' report has minor omissions, which the school has undertaken to rectify in future.
50. Parents make very good contributions to their children's learning. Each week, at least two parents come to help children in class. Parents accompany coach trips to swimming and to the study visits in the locality. They help with the environmental 'green club' after school. Four parents accompanied the Year 6 residential visit to Exmoor. Parents also help in the library. The school's homework policy works effectively, even though some parents have reservations about the amount of homework. Parents of younger children share books with them very frequently at home. This has a positive effect on pupils' reading all the way up to the end of Year 6. Older children get a set pattern of homework for their class in a range of subjects. They research and complete projects at home. Some projects capture the imagination of pupils and their families. Three generations contributed to pupils' accounts of life at the school in Victorian times. Teachers value the homework and mark it well.
51. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed about their children's progress. They are invited to the termly reviews of pupils' individual education plans and can request a meeting with teachers or the special educational needs co-ordinator at any time.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The leadership and management of the school have progressed very well since the last inspection and now are very good. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school. She is a calm but strong leader whose serene presence around the school makes a major contribution to the ethos of the school. The dedicated and hard-working staff all share her vision. They respect and support her very effectively. Members of staff who have specific management responsibilities make valuable contributions to the smooth running of the school. There is an excellent commitment towards raising standards further and a particularly good capability to succeed. The school has explicit Christian aims and values that are outstandingly well reflected in its daily life and work. These include a strong commitment to the social and educational inclusion of pupils of all abilities and circumstances.
53. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. All of the issues raised then have been very successfully addressed. The provision for, and standards in, information and communication technology are vastly improved. The school development plan, which was then in need of revision, is now a very effective working document that provides a clear perspective on educational priorities. The criteria for monitoring progress against the established priorities are clearly defined. The procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching, the curriculum and the attainment of pupils are very good. Planning procedures are dynamic. They consistently respond to the needs of pupils and the demands of the curriculum.
54. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities efficiently. Its long-term overview of the school is very good. The governors understand its strengths and weaknesses very clearly and are fully involved in planning for its future. They have received training in their roles and are particularly good at using the specialist expertise that exists within their group to help the school improve further. They have established very good strategies that enable them to monitor and evaluate the performance of the school against agreed objectives, and to take effective action when needed.
55. The headteacher monitors teaching very successfully and the school is now ready for subject leaders to support her in this work. The procedures for appraisal and performance management are established and comply with the latest statutory requirements. The opportunities provided for the professional development of all staff are good. There are very effective induction and support procedures for new staff. The school has excellent potential for the training of new teachers.
56. The register of pupils with special educational needs is up-to-date and individual education plans are succinct and appropriately individual. Teachers have copies of individual plans so that they can meet pupils' needs as nearly as possible when drawing up their lesson planning. The special educational needs co-ordinator is efficient and knows the pupils with special educational needs very well. She monitors the individual plans for these pupils to ensure their progress is fully supported and that the targets contained in their plans are addressed.
57. The headteacher and governors are very committed to spending the school's funding to sustain the achievements of pupils at a high level. The school uses its budget very well. It allocates spending appropriately to the targets in the school's development plan. The headteacher and the finance sub committee monitor spending to compare it with local authority guidance each month. The secretary gives high quality support. She makes very good use of new technology in the office. She has developed her own method for annotating the information in the monthly printout. Governors find this very helpful. The school relates grants for staff training directly to pupils' learning. This has a positive effect on standards. For example, recent training for teaching and non-teaching staff has greatly

strengthened their use of information and communication technology, compared with the situation at the time of the last inspection. The school spends very effectively on special educational needs, providing good support for these pupils.

58. The school follows the principles of best value meticulously. It applies these, both to its expenditure and its income from facilities, such as letting its hut for pre-school use. Its priority is to spend available money to benefit pupils at present in school. This shows in the fact that the present year's carry-forward is only 2 per cent, less than half the recommended maximum. The cost per pupil is in line with that spent in small schools nationally. The school gives very good value for money.
59. The school has a very good level of staffing, and teachers have a very good balance of skills and expertise. Since the last inspection, they have built up their skills in teaching information and communication technology, and in using it in other subjects. The school buys in specialists for music and physical education and deploys them effectively. The two learning support staff provide very effective help in classes. The school deploys other staff carefully and makes good use of their talents. In particular, the secretary's expertise gives teachers a great deal of help with routine administration.
60. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. The principal weakness is the quality of the mobile classrooms for the two junior classes. Both mobiles are now showing their age. The local education authority has undertaken to build a new classroom within the next school year. This will be a valuable and much needed improvement. It is hoped that this will also provide a much needed increase in toilet facilities for adults. The school makes good use of the Victorian building. It has recently added a music room at the front of the school. There are attractive displays of pupils' work around the school. The outdoor accommodation is superb. The surrounding landscape is attractive. The field has plenty of space for sports pitches. The garden has a wide range of trees, shrubs and flowers. It includes adventure play equipment. Since the previous inspection, the school has marked the playground, enhancing pupils' play and their physical education lessons.
61. Learning resources are good overall. The library has a wide range of fiction and non-fiction, well displayed. For its size, the school has an outstanding collection of musical instruments. It matches the national average in computers. One of its six computers is outdated, but it works effectively for an introductory program in the infant class. The school makes good use of places of interest within the locality. For example, pupils visit the museum of rural life at Glastonbury and the wetlands centre on the Somerset levels. Local facilities add interest and relevance to the curriculum, especially in history and geography.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. There are no major issues, but the headteacher, staff and governors may like to consider the following less important, but nevertheless significant points for development. To review:

(1) assessment procedures by:

- identifying the very good practice already in place, particularly in English and mathematics, and using it to develop a simple and useful system to track pupils' attainment and progress across the school;
- extending the very good practice, already existing in science and English, of keeping portfolios of high quality pupils' work;

*(paragraphs: 27, 40-41, 48, 75, 81)*

(2) the mathematics provision throughout the school to ensure pupils are challenged highly enough, particularly in investigative work.

*(paragraphs: 82-83)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	15
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	12	2	0	0	0	0
Percentage	7	80	13	0	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	79
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	10

#### 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	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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)<sup>5</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	3	4	7

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (89)	100 (89)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

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

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	6	5	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	91 (93)	82 (86)	91 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	100 (93)	100 (86)	100 (100)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

<sup>5</sup> The existing guidance from OFSTED is that test and examination data should be excluded from inspection reports if the year group is 10 or fewer. This also applies to year groups of boys and girls separately.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	78
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24
Average class size	26

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	55

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	187,907
Total expenditure	189,107
Expenditure per pupil	2,591
Balance brought forward from previous year	9,576
Balance carried forward to next year	8,376

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 48.7%

Number of questionnaires sent out	78
Number of questionnaires returned	38

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	84	16	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	37	3	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	47	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	45	13	0	8
The teaching is good.	55	32	0	0	13
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	50	16	8	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	18	8	5	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	32	2	0	11
The school works closely with parents.	47	29	11	11	2
The school is well led and managed.	58	32	0	0	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	50	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	47	8	0	0

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

63. Very nearly all of the children beginning school attend the nearby pre-school group so they are very familiar with the school. The few children who join the school from elsewhere, or at different times, are very well cared for and helped to settle in quickly. The first assessments done with these young children indicate that attainment on entry is above the county averages. Children join a class of pupils whose ages range from five to seven. Consequently, from the start, they are aware of being members of a group and of belonging to an established community. The provision in the reception class is carefully planned. Planning is based on the Early Learning Goals for all the children in this age group. The school's strong stance on educational inclusion is being put into practice. Their activities are considerably enriched by a very good range of visits, visitors and, unusually, daily brief lessons in French. Moreover, the school's very good provision for music and physical education enhances the experience of these very young children on a regular basis.

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

64. There is a very strong emphasis on the children's personal, social and emotional development resulting in very good progress in this aspect of their learning. Consequently, by the time they become five, all children, including those with special educational needs, have exceeded the required goals. This is an area of strength. All the staff establish a calm supportive atmosphere where every child is valued as an individual. Children are eager to come to school, observe the classroom routines and settle swiftly to their activities. After registration, they line up quietly, ready for assemblies. They help to tidy up at the end of their lessons. The children show respect for all adults who help them, including temporary staff and those who voluntarily come to listen to them read. They appreciate the needs of others in the class, share resources and wait patiently for their turn, for example, when using the computer. They are quick to celebrate the success of others in their group and generous with their praise. All the children shared a real sense of awe and wonder when, in a science lesson, the bubbles that they blew floated across the light.

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

65. The children make good progress in language and literacy activities, so, by the time they become five, they attain standards that are above expectations. They recognise single letter sounds confidently and are beginning to recognise long sounds, such as 'ee' and 'oo'. They enjoy discussion and are keen to contribute their ideas and opinions, using a wide and appropriate vocabulary. They listen very well to each other and to their teachers and other adults. For example, they put forward their own memories of the school's weekend celebrations to acknowledge the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its foundation. 'I liked the part when....' All write their own names correctly using capital letters and most write simple sentences independently, including capital letters and full stops. For instance after a science activity studying bubbles, they wrote 'The bubbles move when I blow on them', using their knowledge and understanding of initial sounds very confidently. They enjoy stories, such as Red Riding Hood and have developed the habit of taking books home every night.

## Mathematical development

66. In mathematics, children make good progress so that, by the age of five, their attainment is above expectations. Most readily count up to 60 in ones, twos, fives and tens. They use mental recall skills to calculate how much money their teacher has if she has two pence in one hand and five pence in the other. They work out how many sweets she will have left if she had eight to begin with but gave away one to a friend. They pay close attention in these mental warm-up sessions and are keen to answer. They recite the days of the week in the correct order and begin to recognise 'yesterday' and 'tomorrow' accurately. They know the class poem about what happens on each school day; for example, when Golden Time is and when they go swimming. When investigating shape, they name simple two-dimensional shapes, such as circles, squares, rectangles and squares, and know their properties. They recognise cylinders confidently and begin to recognise cones, pyramids, cuboids and spheres. They have a good range of mathematical terms, such as 'shorter', 'longer', 'round', 'more than' and 'less than'. They know when their birthdays are and how old they will be next time.

## Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. The provision for the children's knowledge and understanding of the world, and of their own cultural heritage, is very good. Consequently, the standards reached by the children are above expectations. The children's understanding of the passage of time is enhanced in interesting ways. For instance, all joined in celebrating the school's anniversary over a weekend, and enjoyed sharing chocolate biscuits when one of their class helpers had her sixteenth birthday. They are familiar with features of the local church because they visit it regularly for celebrations and services, for example at harvest, Christmas and Easter. They enjoy stories from the Bible and know that events described in them happened long ago. They begin to distinguish fact from fiction. For instance, they know that wolves don't talk and that trees can't walk. They carry out investigations into how seeds sprout, what they need and how their appearance changes day by day. Their drawings are accurate, showing clearly how seedlings bend towards the light. They begin to develop their knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology by the regular use of the classroom computer, and already know the names of the resources, such as *monitor*, *keyboard*, *font*, and *printer*. Their activities in the craft area are varied and they gain an understanding of how different materials can be successfully joined together, such as fur and cardboard when making rats and mice that roll around the floor. They enjoy a lively debate about preserving features of their village, such as the post-office, for the future. Very good use is made of study trips and visitors to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of the wider world. For example, they visit a nearby castle and dress up as kings, queens and princesses for a day, travel to a beach to experience a contrasting environment and work in a Victorian laundry using a *posser* and *dolly pegs*. These experiences bring the Early Learning Goals vividly to life and add meaning to classroom discussions.

## Physical development

68. Provision for children's physical development is very good, resulting in all children, including those with special educational needs, reaching standards above expectations. All the children have access regularly to a safe outdoor area where they are supervised for balancing, climbing and jumping activities on large, fixed apparatus. In addition, they use the hard surface area for ball skills and use a range of other small apparatus, such as wheeled toys, hoops and skittles. The children work individually, in pairs and as groups. For instance, they practised hard for a sports day, learning the accepted routines of running races. They all have weekly access to swimming lessons. In class, there is very good provision for children to develop their fine motor control skills when using a wide range of small tools such as glue spreaders, pencils, scissors and wands in bubble pots.

Staff show their care and knowledge of the children by providing special scissors for left-handed children. By the time they reach the age of five, children write their names clearly with increasing control of their pencils, and use the computer mouse with developing accuracy as they click on small icons to print out their work. When making a replica of the village post office, they recall the skill they need to employ when cutting out a square in a piece of card. 'You push the points into the middle and then cut out to the corners.'

### **Creative development**

69. The provision for creative development is very good. Children reach standards above expectations by the time they are five years old. They have many opportunities to practise their previously acquired skills and to develop new ones in a well-resourced area adjacent to their classroom. They are taught a very good range of basic techniques for mixing and applying paint, employing a range of differently sized brushes with confidence and increasing accuracy. They use different materials to make individual collages and cut coloured paper into mathematical shapes, such as triangles and squares. The children enjoy freely investigating different ways of joining materials together, as they construct monsters and robots using card, glue and paint. They use clay to make Victorian tiles and paint the finished items using colour effectively. The children's individual work shows an increasing awareness of pattern, shape and colour. All the children enjoy singing a range of songs and record the sounds they hear around the school, such as birdsong, a squeaking door and the fire alarm. They have marbled large sheets of paper to make covers for their project books and have used fabric crayons to draw a self-portrait for the class collage recording the school's anniversary. Their individual drawings reflect many areas of learning, such as Pentecost, monkey-nut seedlings, drums and St George. Working as a group, they have made a 'Big Book' about 'The House that Jack Built'. This includes extremely effective individual paintings of all the characters such as rats and cats, together with captions telling the story. Christian festivals are celebrated in especially meaningful ways. At Christmas time, all the children make mince pies and, working together, mix and bake a large Christmas cake, which is eaten and evaluated by all pupils and parents. They each make a snowball to decorate the icing on the cake: the snowballs truly and effectively reflect the hands-on nature of this activity – and the 'grey nature' of Charlton Mackrell snow.
70. The quality of teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is very good, as is the quality of the support staff. The children gain from being in a supportive, caring environment, which is efficiently run and very well organised. All adults know the children inside out and the liaison between them is exemplary. The many rich experiences provided for all the children, both in school and out in the wider community, stand them in very good stead for what lies ahead when they reach the age of five. The Foundation Stage is a strength of the school.

### **ENGLISH**

71. At the time of the last inspection, standards were in line with the national average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. They have improved since then and are now above average for 7 and 11-year-olds. There are particular strengths in speaking, listening and reading, which are well above average in all year groups. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve very well. This is because of the very good quality teaching in literacy lessons and because of the very good support they receive from the knowledgeable teaching assistants.
72. **Pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good. A key element in this is the excellent attitude of the pupils towards their work. Throughout the school, pupils' behaviour is invariably very good. They listen well, try hard and co-operate together in a sensible and constructive way. Relationships are excellent and pupils respect**

each other and their teachers. Consequently, they listen to each other carefully and share their ideas in discussions, sensibly and deferentially. These excellent attitudes to their learning contribute very successfully to the pupils' social, moral and personal development. Teachers encourage the youngest pupils to listen carefully and speak out confidently, using well-structured sentences and correct vocabulary. This was seen particularly clearly in a geography lesson in the infant class when pupils discussed looking after their environment. The teacher kept the discussion open-ended allowing pupils to offer their own ideas willingly and confidently. Older pupils build on these skills very well and by Year 6 speak articulately and assertively on a number of subjects.

73. By the ages of 7 and 11, standards in reading are well above average. Pupils enjoy books and know how to use the contents and index pages to find their way around fiction and non-fiction books. The school inculcates a love of reading in pupils and they develop their own likes and dislikes, having favourite authors about whom they talk readily. There is a well-stocked and pleasant library. This is used regularly and enjoyed by pupils in all classes. The older pupils know their way around the books in the library very well and explain clearly how to find a book on any particular subject. In lessons, pupils routinely turn to a dictionary to check their spellings when they are not sure. They confidently read their own writing aloud to visitors or to the whole class when asked. Pupils in Junior 1 had great fun reading aloud their nonsense poems and swapping last lines of the limericks to make them even more nonsensical. Their facility in using books means that they learn rapidly and achieve very well. Teachers encourage higher attaining pupils, and those identified as gifted and talented, to use their reading skills to advance their learning in all subjects. They do this through individual research and often by using computers. Less able pupils achieve very well because they receive very good support from teachers and support staff. Parents are encouraged to help their children and this significantly enhances learning. Diaries and reading cards act as useful two-way communication between school and home.
74. Standards in writing are good for 7 and 11-year-olds. Younger pupils structure their writing carefully and use good punctuation and sentence structure. They begin to use more complex techniques to make their work interesting. For example, in their nonsense poems one pupil used 'quivering quick choir' to demonstrate alliteration. Because teachers place great emphasis on phonics, pupils play with sounds and recognise what is correct in their writing. An example of this was seen when the teacher wrote 'damij' on the board, asked what it said and then asked for spelling patterns which would sound the same. The pupils suggested several combinations of sound but recognised when they had the right one - 'age' - because it 'looked right'. Similarly, one pupil, when asked what combination of letters would make the sound 'aw' as in 'straw' suggested 'our' as in 'your' and 'ore' as in 'more'. This ability to manipulate sounds means that the majority of pupils are good spellers. Teachers have identified that, whilst the implementation of the literacy strategy has helped support improved standards in writing, it has, in some respects, inhibited pupils' progress in imaginative and extended writing. Hence, extra care is taken and time is given to ensure pupils have ample opportunities to write in a wide range of styles. Thus, by Year 6, pupils develop the ability to write in varied and interesting ways to convey their ideas on a number of subjects. For example, when asked to write about the pageant and weekend celebrations of the school's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, pupils chose a variety of writing styles, diaries and reports, as well as straight narratives.
75. Teachers plan very good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects. For example, in history, they encourage pupils to use books and computers to find information relevant to the topic and research their own ideas. They also encourage pupils to use computers to write, and then edit, their own stories and poems. Pupils with specific reading and writing difficulties are encouraged to work in this way so that their

work is well presented. Teachers set interesting and useful homework for pupils. They use it very effectively to support and enhance work done in lessons. Most pupils and parents are fully committed to this work. Teachers mark pupils' work in a positive and encouraging way, but they do not always make clear what it is that the pupil has to do next in order to improve.

76. Teachers plan very effectively for all abilities to ensure that the full curriculum is available to all. Good extra support is given to pupils with special educational needs and teachers are careful to ensure that no part of the curriculum is missed on a regular basis, for music lessons for example. Resources are good and used very well.

## MATHEMATICS

77. Throughout the school, standards of attainment in mathematics have risen since the time of the last inspection. Standards for 7 and 11-year-olds are now judged to be above average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all classes. The school has taken a strong stance on educational inclusion and has clearly put its principles into practice: all have equal access to all areas of mathematics.
78. By the age of seven, pupils calculate confidently using the processes of addition, subtraction, simple multiplication and division. They recognise the properties of common two-dimensional shapes, such as squares and triangles, and sensibly estimate lengths in centimetres, checking their guesses by careful measurement. Using 2p, 5p and 10p coins, they make up 'purses' of various amounts, such as 27p. They then decide whether they can 'afford' to buy items from a shop and how much change they might have when they finish their shopping spree. They are beginning to amass data to construct graphs and use the information to identify the most or least popular breakfast drink. Most pupils are developing an understanding of fractions, calculating by doubling or by using their knowledge and understanding of the multiplication tables, particularly of twos and fours. All recognise the time using an analogue clock and calculate how long activities take, such as finishing their post-swimming snack and drink.
79. In Year 2, in a quick-fire warm-up session pupils demonstrate their knowledge of multiplication tables to calculate the factors of given numbers, such as 24 or 56. Their extension activities provide challenging opportunities to identify algebraic variables when they calculate the value of equations such as  $x^3$  plus  $y^2 = 28$ . They identify the rotational symmetry of a range of patterns and shapes and successfully solve problems using multiplication and division of decimals to two or three places. Their knowledge and understanding of the terms *frequency table*, *mode*, and *median* are less secure, although they readily calculate area and perimeter using the standard formulae. They enjoy their studies on *probability*, recognising and accurately plotting a range of possibilities ranging from *certain* to *impossible*.
80. Pupils respond to mathematics very positively. They enjoy their tasks very much and rise willingly to the challenges that their teachers pose. Most pupils are very keen and enthusiastic and confidently contribute to lessons, providing clear explanations of how they have reached their answers. They work well together in pairs or groups. They enjoy presenting their work neatly and carefully in their exercise books. Behaviour in mathematics lessons is very good; when pupils are appropriately challenged and engrossed, their behaviour is excellent.
81. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is very high and ranges from very good to excellent. When teaching is excellent it is characterised by a brisk pace, dynamic delivery and high expectations. Lessons have a strong sense of purpose and objectives are made very clear at the outset. Not a moment is wasted. Teachers give the more able pupils additional or more challenging activities to ensure that their progress is accelerated.

Classroom organisation and pupil management are extremely efficient, lessons are well balanced and the teacher spurs on the class using encouraging phrases like 'Are we all thinking hard?' and 'Battle on!'. These remarks keep pupils on their toes and maintain the momentum of the lesson very effectively. All teachers and their assistants work hard during lessons, visiting all pupils to provide encouragement and support. They take these opportunities to conduct on-going assessments of how well their pupils are doing. However, the scrutiny of work indicates that teachers' marking is inconsistent and generally does not indicate to pupils clearly enough how they can improve their work.

82. Pupils' work shows that mathematics lessons are well planned and regularly conducted. The breadth of the mathematical curriculum is secure apart from data handling, which has not received the same coverage as other aspects of the subject. However, the use of information and communication technology in representing mathematical calculations is developing well and most pupils have mastered the use of the mouse and printer to good effect. For example, a pupil with special educational needs used the computer very confidently to plot the route taken by a robot in a maze, using his knowledge and understanding of angles and distance accurately. Very good homework activities are frequently set to reinforce class work. Teachers mark these exercises regularly.
83. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and determined to raise standards still further. As yet she has not had the opportunity to visit other classes to observe mathematics teaching and learning. A review of the mathematics scheme of work is urgently required to evaluate the use of worksheets. These tend to stifle investigative approaches and, if over-used, can hinder progress, especially of the more able pupils. The use of worksheets also makes tracking pupils' step-by-step sequential and coherent development through mathematics very difficult, since many sheets are undated.

## SCIENCE

84. By Year 2 and Year 6, standards are above average. Standards have improved since the time of the last inspection. This is because of the very good teaching which enables pupils to achieve very well. Pupils, including those who have moderate or more complex learning difficulties, make good progress in their learning. There is no significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls. Pupils' factual knowledge is good and their investigative work is of a high standard.
85. Throughout the school, pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills well to support their learning in science. They read successfully to carry out research and write their findings in clear, legible and logical formats. Teachers develop good methods for pupils to record their findings simply. For example, work is often recorded in tabular or chart form, to get to the essence of the scientific knowledge. Pupils also use their numeracy skills effectively to record numerical results. They use computers successfully to support their learning and present their findings.
86. Although only one science lesson was seen during the inspection, work in pupils' books and teachers' planning shows that the school places great emphasis on pupils learning through practical experiences. Teachers plan activities very effectively to build on pupils' previous knowledge and experiences. For example, Year 2 pupils use their knowledge from previous work about fair tests to explore ways of finding out which materials make the best thermal conductors. By Year 6, pupils demonstrate very good understanding of materials and their properties. They talk readily about reversible and irreversible changes in materials; for example, what happens when salts are mixed with grapefruit and vinegar. They systematically record observations and measurements and use a good range of methods to present their findings. Pupils said that they enjoy the practical nature of lessons and remembered well the work they had done.

87. Evidence shows that teachers have very good subject knowledge and teach the basic skills needed by pupils to build up their scientific knowledge step by step. Pupils demonstrate that this happens by the way in which they use correct scientific vocabulary accurately when discussing their work. For example, pupils talked confidently about 'magnetic' and 'friction' and clearly understood the concepts of condensation and evaporation. This results in the very good achievement of all groups of pupils and the above average standards. Strong links are made to other subjects wherever possible so that pupils make sense of what they learn. Throughout the school, science is a lively and dynamic subject. This results in pupils being curious and interested in how and why things work and they learn rapidly and to a good level.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

88. Standards achieved in art by pupils aged 7 and 11 are above expectations for pupils of their age. This is an improvement since, at the time of the last inspection, standards for 7-year-olds were judged to be in line with national expectations. Standards for 11-year-olds have been maintained. The school's strong stance on educational inclusion has been put into practice and all pupils have equal access to art. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in lessons because they work hard and persevere with their tasks. They reach good standards in drawing and painting, and in modelling using clay and other materials. Pupils' work includes two-dimensional items, work on fabric, printing, sketching in pencil and pastels and painting.
89. In Years 1 and 2, pupils use a wide range of media including paint, crayon and pencil crayons. Pupils' illustrations in their books show attention to detail, such as monkey-nut seedlings and petals of flowers, although proportions in their drawings are weak and there is little evidence of shading and texture. However, they employ paint well when decorating tiles or completing their modelling of monsters and space craft.
90. By the age of 11, pupils have mastered a number of basic techniques, such as colour mixing and the study of proportion, particularly with regard to the human form. For instance, they are aware of the relationship between hand and face, and where to position eyes on a self-portrait. In conversation they demonstrate an awareness of the work of artists of other times, such as Picasso, Van Gogh and Leonardo da Vinci. They describe the peculiar features attributable to these three very different styles with accuracy, but are less sure about the period in which they lived or whereabouts they worked. No work 'in the style of' was seen during the time of the inspection.
91. Teachers plan their work to link with other subject areas, such as history, although links with information and communication technology are as yet underdeveloped. Older pupils study sepia photographs of Victorians. They discuss how Victorians sat for photographs for a long time and attempt to sketch portraits to depict themselves sitting still and stiffly. For instance, the girls are asked to imagine that they have a sprig of holly under their chins, so that they remember to sit up very straight. They paint their finished sketches with appropriate colours to represent a typical sepia portrait very effectively.
92. Pupils enjoy lessons and have very good attitudes to their tasks. They concentrate very hard and willingly persevere to improve their first attempts. However, they do not always make full use of their pencils and have not completely mastered the techniques of shading, although their knowledge of proportion is good. Behaviour in lessons is excellent because they are engrossed in their tasks and want to do well. They are eager to contribute to initial discussions and generous in their praise of each other's work.
93. Teaching is good. Some aspects of teaching are very good; for example, the very good use of literacy as a stimulus. Teachers make good links with other areas of the curriculum, such as history and geography, so that art is seen as a meaningful part of the curriculum.

Attention is given to teaching basic techniques such as painting and sketching, and pupils' work in displays shows steady progression in attainment through the school. Pupils' work is mounted to very good effect and suitable captions are included, providing a good link with literacy.

94. The school is alive with a very good display of pupils' work to celebrate the school's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Pupils have learnt about life in Victorian times when the school was founded and their paintings clearly demonstrate their understanding of those times. For example, paintings of chimney sweeps, farming and harvest scenes have been executed with care and attention to detail.
95. Throughout the school, pupils' work in displays clearly shows that individuality is encouraged. Each painting is unique and there has been no use of templates or no over-direction from teachers. Pupils have expressed themselves freely and this shines through in the lively individuality of their work. The school celebrates the success of pupils who enter competitions. For instance, a pupil's Christmas card design was chosen by the local Member of Parliament for his 'card of the season'.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. Pupils reach standards by the ages of 7 and 11 that are above expectations. The evidence gathered from pupils' work in displays, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and teachers confirms that, as pupils move through the school, they meet the full range of required experiences. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they proceed through the school. The school takes a strong stance on educational inclusion, ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the entire curriculum.
97. By the time they are seven, pupils have had a wide range of experiences in investigating how best to fix materials together. They have used glues, thread and a range of papers, card and fabric in the course of their experiments. They have taken apart cardboard packaging to see how it has been assembled. They have also taken a part in the traditional annual rites of making mince pies and Christmas cakes, and have particularly enjoyed evaluating their efforts afterwards. Similarly, pupils have planned how to make sandwiches, deciding the component parts that they need and the correct order in which to use them. Again, the evaluation part of the process was very much enjoyed by everyone.
98. Teachers make very good links with other areas of the curriculum, although as yet the use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped. However, very good links are made with the history topic about Victorians and with the project to celebrate the school's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. For example, pupils disassembled a Victorian toy and, using the parts as templates, made their own versions employing a range of tools such as hacksaws and sandpaper. Very good links with mathematics were made since all the parts had to be precisely measured. For instance, the five parts that composed the 'acrobat' had to be fitted on to the smallest piece of wood possible. This involved the study of area in a meaningful way and very careful painting of fine stripes, which pupils undertake assiduously.
99. Eleven-year-olds have developed a sophisticated range of techniques. For example, they have learnt how to make hand puppets using *papier-mâché* and fabric, planned their work and evaluated the results afterwards. They have disassembled torches and clocks to see how they used to work. Before making their own books, they investigated how books are put together. Current work in Year 6 is centred on building very effective theatres decorated with squiggly pasta sprayed with gold paint, and complete with movable curtains inside the proscenium arch. They are investigating ways of lighting the scenes using batteries, wires, bulbs and switches. They design and make scenery and card puppets as

characters in their plays, and decide on the script and the plot. They recognise and use the words *comedy* and *tragedy*. This project forms a very strong link with literacy. The work with theatres provides a very good platform for pupils' personal development, because they intend to charge 1p for every admission to their shows. The funds collected will be sent to Afghanistan to help towards building schools. Good links with information and communication technology are evident when pupils create an outline of a school using control instructions, such as 'left 20', 'forward 100' etc.

100. Planning and evaluations are conducted through discussions rather than through writing. However, in discussion, pupils confirm that they write lists of things that they need before they start work, and describe how to use tools, such as hacksaws, correctly and safely. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards this subject because teachers make very good links with other areas of their work, such as literacy, mathematics and history. Pupils continually review and improve their work in lessons, discussing how they will make their puppets work. There is a very high level of motivation, for example, a clear determination to succeed.
101. Little teaching of design and technology was observed during the inspection, but evidence suggests strongly that teachers are sufficiently knowledgeable to ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed progressively. Making strong links with other areas of the curriculum brings the subject to life, generating a high level of enthusiasm and perseverance in pupils' attitudes. Teachers have introduced imaginative ideas, such as making Victorian toys and working theatres, which make the subject fun and interesting. They now need to consider how pupils can record their work to show clearly the developmental and evaluative processes that they enjoy so much.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

102. Standards have improved since the last inspection when they were in line with the expectations of the National Curriculum, for pupils aged 7 and 11. They are currently above average in Years 2 and 6. All pupils, including those with specific learning difficulties, learn very well in lessons and achieve very well over time.
103. Year 2 pupils learn how to make basic maps and plans. They learn where countries, such as France, are on the world map. They learn about weather around the world and how plants, animals and people adapt as a consequence of the climate in which they live. Teachers build on these skills and by Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of mapping techniques and use maps proficiently. They study changes in the West Country's industry and shifts in rural population. This work is closely linked to history topics and has been particularly relevant in the recent study of the school over the past 150 years. As a result, the pupils have a very good idea of the school's place in the wider world and a very good understanding of the local culture, set in terms of Somerset, and where that fits in the diverse culture of Britain.
104. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers plan many practical opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in their learning. They use the grounds well as a resource to enhance the curriculum. The school organises regular visits, including residential ones, to provide opportunities to expand the pupils' knowledge of the world around them. These opportunities also enhance pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy their work and speak enthusiastically about their visits. Teachers make good links to other subjects so that pupils learn in a 'joined up' and meaningful way. Consequently, pupils relate their work in history or religious education to their work in geography and make sense of their learning. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills to help their learning. For example, they write letters describing hurricanes and show, using block graphs, how weekday temperatures and wind directions vary.

## **HISTORY**

105. Standards have improved since the time of the last inspection when they were average at Year 2 and above average at Year 6. They are now above average for 7-year-olds and well above average for 11-year-olds. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well.
106. The school places a great deal of emphasis on history and uses the local environment particularly well to promote the pupils' very good learning. In recent weeks, the school has lived and breathed history in its celebrations of its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This culminated in a joyous weekend of festivities and a pageant on the school field. To prepare for this, the pupils studied hard to learn about how life would have been in school in Victorian times and how the village had changed over the years. All pupils and staff, joined by many parents and governors, shared a Victorian day in school, when everyone dressed in clothes of the period and lessons were conducted by stern tutors – otherwise known as 'the teachers'. During the project, the pupils used very effectively the school premises to build up a picture of what life used to be like. The infant class's craft room with the original kitchen range and the wall of tiles into which are carved quotations from Proverbs all help bring history alive for the pupils.
107. Through this work, younger pupils gain very good understanding of 'now' and 'then' and how life used to be. Year 2 pupils discussed, very knowledgeably, the differences and similarities of school 150 years ago with school today. Teachers build skilfully on this knowledge and, by the age of 11, pupils talk knowledgeably about the impact of the monarchy in Victorian times. They study the reasons and effects of British exploration in Africa and India and begin to understand why people leave their own country in search of a different way of life. This work strongly supports their social and cultural understanding and personal development.
108. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. Teachers plan lessons very well and make the subject come alive. Consequently, pupils are interested and want to learn about the past and relate it to life today. They say that they enjoy their lessons and are eager to discuss what they have learned. Teachers give pupils plenty of very good opportunities to use their literacy skills well. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 use their writing skills very well to record their Victorian project in a special hand-made topic book. Teachers value this work and mark it sensitively and encouragingly.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

109. Provision and standards have improved significantly since the time of the last inspection. At that time standards were below average for 7 and 11-year-olds. There has been very good progress since then and standards for 7-year-olds are now above average. Eleven-year-olds' standards are average, but rising rapidly. So much so that, in Year 5, pupils are on track to achieve above average standards by the time they finish Year 6. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 already achieve at levels above those expected for their ages. The reason that Year 6 have not reached the same standards is because they have not had enough time experiencing the improved provision and curriculum, or to practice their new skills beyond the expected level (Level 4) for the age group.
110. The improvement in standards is due to a number of factors:
  - improved provision of hardware and software;
  - adjustment to the curriculum and the introduction of Curriculum 2000;
  - the training that teachers have received, which has increased both their subject knowledge and confidence;
  - the way in which pupils increasingly use computers to support their learning as a tool in all subjects;

- the enthusiasm of staff, parents, governors and pupils for the subject.
111. Pupils have very good opportunities to use their literacy and numeracy skills when working with computers. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 used their researching skills to interrogate the Internet to find out about schools in Afghanistan. They did this as part of their project to raise money for children in Afghan schools. Pupils with special educational needs frequently use computers to produce fair copies of their writing. Younger pupils support their mathematical learning well using computer programs designed to test their colour and number concepts.
  112. As a result of the very good teaching, by the end of Year 2, pupils are confident to load the program that they require, use a mouse to organise their work, save and print their own work. They learn to control equipment, such as robots, by planning series of instructions to make them move in certain ways. Older pupils build on these skills very well and by Year 6 begin to predict the results of the decisions when exploring patterns and relationships with simulation programs. Their word processing skills improve and they begin to add, amend and combine information from a variety of sources to present their ideas.
  113. The school recognises that there is still work to be done; for example, the number of computers available to pupils is only just in line with recommended levels. However, there are good plans for further training and development of the subject and its resources.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES - FRENCH**

114. French is taught to all pupils from reception to Year 6. It is taught very well and as a consequence the pupils achieve very good standards. It is a worthwhile addition to the very good curriculum and adds much to the pupils' social and cultural development.
115. Pupils enjoy their daily 10 to 15 minutes sessions and are eager to join in. They answer questions confidently, demonstrating a very good understanding of spoken French. Teachers plan interesting activities, which keep the lessons moving along at a very good pace. Most of the sessions are oral but pupils do record, in picture and word form, some of the vocabulary learned. The amount of writing suitably increases for older pupils as their knowledge increases. In Year 2, they add labels to the pictures that they draw of the words studied; for example, les vaches et les chats (les vaches de Somerset d'accord!) By Year 6, their writing is more complex and uses well structured sentences to tell a story. For example, one pupil wrote, 'Harry Potter habite avec la famille Dursley. Un hibou arrive avec une lettre'. The pupils are proud of their achievements and take great care to present their work very well.
116. Teachers ensure that work is in context by discussing French lifestyles and how children in French schools learn. They use videos and pictures to reinforce the pupils' knowledge and understanding. As a result, the pupils talk knowledgeably about what life is like in France and make valid comparisons with their own lifestyle. Those who have been to France report that they made themselves understood very well.

## **MUSIC**

117. Music is a major strength of the school. At the age of 7, pupils are reaching above average standards. By the age of 11 standards in performance are well above those expected for pupils of this age. These are due to very good teaching by school staff and peripatetic specialists who promote a high degree of interest and enthusiasm for music. The school's strong stance on educational inclusion means that all pupils have equal access to all activities related to this subject. For example, all pupils had their part to play

in the school's celebration of its 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary concert and were invited to a celebratory service.

118. Younger pupils sing with evident pleasure in their music lessons with good control of rhythm, pitch and dynamics. In one lesson they were seen to follow melody lines and rhythms accurately as a result of the class teacher's very expert coaching. They listen closely to their teacher, to each other and to the school orchestra. They pay attention in assemblies as good quality music is played and they learn about the lives of composers such as Sir Hubert Parry. Older pupils sing more strongly, especially when very unusual links with other areas of the curriculum are made; for example, when they sing 'Happy Birthday' to a member of the class in both French and Latin. The whole school joins together in assemblies to sing a range of well-known but traditional hymns with challenging texts. All use hymn books so that there is an emphasis on reading, which tends to detract from the dynamic quality of the sound. However, they stand up to sing and perform rhythmically and in tune.
119. Good links with other curricular areas are made by teachers in lessons. For instance, pupils' listening skills are further developed in class when they identify and record sounds they hear around them, such as birdsong and the school bell. They take advantage of the many different instruments they have in school every day, and draw tambourines and violins using close observational skills. Linking in a very meaningful way with the past, the whole school is taking part in a project to celebrate the school's foundation 150 years ago. Pupils know how to use a compact disc player effectively, but other links with information and communication technology are underdeveloped at present.
120. The standard of performance is very high. All pupils played a part in a concert performing a specially commissioned work entitled 'Hear Instruction and Be Wise' by Richard Mitchell. For the instrumentalists this involves learning the disciplines and skills of playing in an orchestra: playing their own part, listening to others, knowing when to come in and when to rest, and watching the conductor for indications of speed and dynamics. The school choir's singing is dynamic, rhythmic and tuneful and perfectly complements the lovely sounds produced by the players.
121. All pupils, from Year 3, learn to play the descant recorder. Many learn to play other instruments as well, such as piano, guitar, flute, clarinet, violin and percussion. Instrumental tuition is provided through the Somerset peripatetic service. Judging from one observed lesson and from the results of teaching and practice, the quality of teaching is very high. All pupils have good posture and are working very hard to master the increasingly more challenging technicalities of playing their instruments. For instance, all violinists have mastered the technique of bowing 'up and down' together, bringing strength and colour to their playing. Instrumentalists including recorder players are learning the conventions of standard notation and recognise time and key signatures, as well as a wide range of notes including sharps and flats.
122. Music plays a part in the school's links with the community and promotes pupils' personal development, as well as fostering their spirit of citizenship. For instance, they sing carols to senior citizens and frequently take part in services in the local church.
123. Pupils have excellent attitudes towards music. They know how to set up the orchestra and work together well to put stands away properly afterwards. Although clearly enjoying their music making, they are determined and committed, and take the subject very seriously. They practise regularly and take very good care of their instruments. They turn up promptly for their lessons and show their teachers respect and courtesy. All the pupils are very motivated and take pride and pleasure in their performance. Their enthusiasm is abundant: at the end of a performance, they politely ask, 'Please can we play it all again?'

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

124. Standards since the time of the last inspection have been maintained and are above average for 7 and 11-year-olds. This is a major achievement for a small school where there is no adequate indoor physical education facility. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well.
125. The school's success is due to several factors:
- the commitment of staff and governors to providing good opportunities for pupils to experience a full physical education curriculum;
  - very good specialist teaching, which places great emphasis on pupils' gaining good basic skills in a number of sporting activities;
  - all pupils receiving weekly swimming tuition;
  - the enthusiasm and excellent attitudes of the pupils, who all want to succeed.
126. Pupils work enthusiastically in lessons; for example, they work hard at learning to throw and catch balls accurately. They use space efficiently, gauging accurately the force needed to roll or bounce balls. They thoroughly enjoy their work and co-operate in pairs and groups very well. They show increasingly improved balance and accuracy when controlling large and small balls. Teachers plan lessons so that pupils build systematically on the skills that they have learned and thus improve their techniques. Pupils use and develop the skills learned in the lower classes to very good advantage. Their progress is evident in the increased confidence and dexterity shown by Years 5 and 6 in their lessons. All pupils have a strong sense of fair play and demonstrate good team spirit. Standards in swimming throughout the school are very good because of the regular lessons for all pupils.
127. Teachers plan a wide variety of activities for pupils. They offer chances for pupils to play a good variety of team games, do gymnastics and also to take part in more adventurous sports. The quality of teaching is very good throughout the school. Very good use is made of specialist teachers. The main reason for their success is that they teach the basic skills that pupils need to succeed in their work. They demonstrate and explain clearly what pupils need to do to improve their skills; for example, in teaching fielding skills in cricket pupils are told to 'keep your hands behind the ball'. This means that pupils achieve very well and improve their techniques quickly. Activities challenge the pupils. However, pupils meet the high expectations of the teachers.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

128. Standards achieved by pupils aged 7 and 11 exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since at the time of the last inspection standards for 7-year-olds were judged to be average. Standards for 11-year-olds have been maintained. In line with the school's strong stance on educational inclusion, all pupils have equal access to all areas of religious education. Parents are aware of their right to withdraw their children from religious education lessons and from assemblies.
129. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity, and the way in which Christians lived in the past and how they live today. They have a secure understanding of the major Christian festivals, such as Christmas and Easter. They know that stories about Jesus are to be found in the Bible and they know some of the stories that He told. For example, they know the story of the wise and foolish men, and have drawn pictures to show what happened to their houses. They have also listened to stories from the Old Testament, for example the story of Joseph and his multi-coloured coat. By the age of 11, pupils have developed a deeper knowledge and understanding of Christianity. They appreciate the significance of certain periods in the year, such as 'Trinity', and confidently distinguish between the Old and New Testaments. They recall facts about Jesus and His

life, for example that He was a healer, performed miracles, was born at Christmas and rose from the dead at Easter. Their knowledge about His life is good. For instance, they know that the early Christians were persecuted by the Romans, and used the symbol of a fish when identifying each other.

130. Building on previous experience, older pupils extend their knowledge of other world faiths. Studies of Hinduism look at various aspects of the religion and compare them with Christian traditions. For instance, they know that Hindus worship many gods, although they cannot recall the names of any of them. They have a good knowledge and understanding of other faiths, such as Islam and Judaism. They know about some of the customs of other religions; for instance, they confidently identify their places of worship. They know about the Jewish practices, such as lighting candles and keeping the Sabbath. By the end of Year 6, their knowledge of the Old and New Testaments has widened and they can describe some of the events to be found in each. For instance, they know that the story of how God gave Moses the Ten Commandments is to be found in the Old Testament, and that stories about Jesus are found in the New Testament. They retell some of the miracles; for example, how Jesus changed the water into wine and how He walked upon water.
131. Assemblies are enriched by the presence of visitors who bring their special expertise to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. For instance, preparing pupils for Saint Benedict's day, the vicar brought a monk's habit to show to the pupils and led them in a fruitful discussion about the lives of monks and nuns. Regular visits to the nearby church play a very important part in the development of knowledge and understanding of Christianity. Pupils describe the features and functions of the important items in the building, for example the font, pulpit and altar. They know that certain ceremonies are held in the church, such as christenings, weddings and funerals.
132. Evidence gathered from pupils' work and from discussions with them and with staff, indicates that the teaching of religious education is good. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school. Teachers make very good use of the local church and of visitors to enrich the curriculum, which is planned in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. Resources to support studies of world faiths are satisfactory. The use of information and communication technology is, as yet, underdeveloped, although pupils have downloaded information about how Muslims worship. On the other hand, good links are made with other subject areas, such as art, history and literacy. For instance, pupils listen attentively and with respect and they are eager to discuss what they know about religious education, in particular Christianity, confidently volunteering their opinions.
133. Pupils' work in religious education extends far beyond the subject and has taken root in pupils' personal, social and moral development. Their spiritual development is successfully promoted in assemblies and in their daily lives, as pupils are given opportunities to reflect upon the world around them and on the value of life. For example, pupils are encouraged to put others' feelings before their own. They give pleasure to the senior citizens who live nearby by singing Christmas carols to them and organising a strawberry tea to entertain them. Older pupils are using their initiative by raising funds for schools in Afghanistan, through their hard work in design and technology lessons. The pageant to celebrate the school's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary has provided many opportunities for pupils to reflect on the passing of time, and how they can make their environment a better place for others to grow up in and enjoy.

