

**CANNINGTON C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Cannington, Bridgwater

LEA area : Somerset

Unique reference number : 123786

Headteacher : Mrs. J. Hossent

Lead inspector : Elizabeth Camplin

Dates of inspection : 29<sup>th</sup> September – 02<sup>nd</sup> October 2003

Inspection number : 255706

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	165
School address:	Brook Street Cannington Bridgwater Somerset
Postcode:	TA5 2HP
Telephone number:	01278 652368
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev. Peter Martin
Date of previous inspection:	9 <sup>th</sup> March 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Cannington Church of England Primary School caters for 165 pupils, aged between four and eleven. The school roll has expanded by more than 20 pupils since the previous inspection. It serves a wide area, including parts of Bridgwater town, as well as other villages surrounding Cannington. In 2002, it won the national government's Schools Achievement Award for improving standards and a 'Healthy Schools' award. It also introduced the teaching of French in Year 6. Currently, all pupils' first language is English. There are three pupils from mixed-race backgrounds. Pupils' family backgrounds are wide-ranging, and are, overall, above average economically. A significant minority, however, experience personal difficulties arising from change in home circumstances. Children enter Reception in the September prior to their fifth birthday. Most benefit from pre-school education and their attainment is typical of the age group. Overall, 12.7 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, including one pupil with a statement. A further six pupils receive support from external agencies to help them with a variety of difficulties, including managing their behaviour, making progress academically, or with developing speech and communication. The percentage of pupils who join the school other than at the usual time of admission is above the usual level for all schools.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**The school's effectiveness is sound and its value for money is satisfactory.** Pupils in Year 6 reach standards that are above average. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Parents, staff and governors have full confidence in the headteacher who is capably leading and managing school improvement. The vast majority of pupils think well of the school. Governors are supportive but not yet sufficiently involved in accounting for the school's performance.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Rapidly improving standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work very well together to raise standards.
- The high quality of teaching and learning in the mixed class of pupils from Years 5 and 6.
- Consistently good teaching and learning in Reception despite accommodation deficiencies.
- Recent efforts to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour are having a positive impact on their happiness, confidence and self-esteem.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Some weak teaching in Years 3 and 4 prevents pupils from doing their best.
- Governors do not play a sufficiently prominent part in taking action to improve the school.
- Marking, practice in setting targets to achieve, and reports to parents, are inconsistent in quality.

The school's improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, and has been good in the past two years. Standards have risen in line with schools nationally. Of the key issues, attainment is now average in information and communication technology. Planning for higher-attaining pupils is better, and very good in Years 5 and 6. There are now thorough systems for checking and recording pupils' attainment in English and mathematics. There is sound teaching about cultural diversity, and there are increasingly good opportunities for pupils to exercise initiative and to take responsibility. Marking has not improved enough in all classes and some teaching is still unsatisfactory.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	C	C	A
Mathematics	A	C	A	A*
Science	C	B	C	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

**Achievement is satisfactory overall but high in Year 6.** Standards in Year 6 in 2002 were above average overall. Results in mathematics in 2002 were in the top 5 per cent in the country mainly because of the very good achievement of the higher attainers. (A\*) Results in 2003 tests are likely to be even better. In contrast, the trend in test results in Year 2 is well below average and poor compared with similar schools. Since the national tests in 2002, there has been significant improvement in standards in Year 2 and achievement is satisfactory overall. Writing is currently above average whilst standards are average in reading, mathematics and science. In Years 1 and 2, the achievement of pupils of all levels of capability is good in writing, speaking and listening. In Reception, children also achieve well, especially in their personal and social development. They are well on course to meet the early goals expected for their age. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not always achieve as they should because teaching varies too much. Most pupils with special educational needs, many of whom are boys, achieve well.

**Pupils' personal qualities** are **good** overall. Their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development** is also **good**. **The attitudes and behaviour of the high majority are good too**. Where they are not so good, it is because teaching lacks sufficient authority. Attendance is satisfactory.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching is sound overall.** In the best lessons, teachers provide a variety of interesting activities and pupils know exactly what they are trying to learn because teachers spend sufficient time explaining and discussing it. There is some unsatisfactory teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4 when the lessons do not provide sufficient challenge for pupils of different capability. This leads to immature behaviour that is not adequately corrected. The curriculum has sufficient breadth and balance. It is good for pupils with special educational needs. The school also skilfully promotes participation in sport, drama and art through its choice of school clubs. Procedures for child protection, support and guidance are secure, and health and safety practice is sound. Links with parents and the community are good. Children in Reception are disadvantaged by deficiencies in accommodation.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are good.** The new headteacher and the deputy headteacher lead by example to raise the quality of education. Curriculum managers provide good support. Effective teamwork has led to a sharper view of the school's weaknesses and the development of plans to address them. Governance is unsatisfactory because the governing body does not fully comply with some statutory duties and it relies too much on the headteacher to drive the school's future direction.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents and pupils have generally good views of the school. They appreciate the way staff listen to and respond to concerns and suggestions. Pupils think behaviour is improving but could still be better. Justifiably, parents want to know more about how to help children make good progress.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Raise the quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4.
- Increase the effectiveness of the governing body in accounting for the school's performance.
- Provide children and parents with better information about standards achieved, individual progress and what pupils can do to learn more effectively.
- Make sure that improvements to accommodation for Reception children take place as planned.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Ensure that the health and safety and race equality policies are up-to-date and fully implemented. Publish the arrangements the school makes for pupils withdrawn from collective worship and religious education and distribute the annual governors' report to all parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Achievement is satisfactory overall rather than good because the improvement pupils make is not seamless. As in previous years, compared to their performance when they were in Year 2, pupils in Year 6 have made very good progress. Irrespective of differences in capability, academically and personally, they are achieving well. In Years 3 and 4, though achievement is mainly satisfactory, there are times when pupils of different capability do not make the progress they should. The achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is sound whilst children in Reception have all made a good start and are achieving well, especially in their personal and social development. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs achieve well even when standards they attain are below average.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are rising and pupils in Year 6 achieve well in relation to their capabilities.
- Results in writing show marked improvement in both key stages.
- Children in Reception are good listeners, imaginative and resourceful.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their improvement targets.
- Between 2000 and 2002 not enough pupils in Year 2 reached an above average standard.
- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are capable of making more rapid progress.
- Boys do not have as good a record of achievement as girls, especially at the end of Year 2.

#### **Commentary**

1. Standards are rising because the headteacher and deputy headteacher are vigilant at checking how well pupils are achieving. They have introduced rigorous tracking procedures that enable them to map out progress in every year group. Each term they identify the pupils whose performance is good or better and those who are lagging behind their peers. They seek explanations for individual rates of progress and analyse trends over time, picking out teaching issues as they occur. They use the results to plan staff training and decide where extra support from learning support assistants is needed, for example, help for pupils with writing and spelling. They also purchase new resources when necessary, including more fiction and non-fiction books that appeal to boys and so motivate them to read more.

2. After poor results in the four years prior to 2003, results in Year 2 in 2003 show a pleasing increase in the percentage of pupils reaching an above average standard in reading, writing and mathematics, with writing showing the strongest improvement. This is because of a deliberate effort to increase the range of opportunities across the curriculum. Improvement has not been as marked in science, however, where results of teacher assessment were still too low compared with other schools. The school has recognised that there was a lack of attention to covering Level 3 work in Year 2, so that the more able were insufficiently challenged. The co-ordinator is working with colleagues to address this planning issue. There is, however, a recognised need to cater more successfully for boys who do not have as good a record of achievement as girls in other aspects of their work too, such as reading. This is why the school has just joined a special project run by the local education authority (LEA) aimed at raising the achievement of boys. The likelihood of success is good for several reasons. The return of a seconded teacher, good support for pupils with special educational needs, a settled teaching team in infant classes, and better induction for late admissions, are all making a positive difference to the progress pupils make in Years 1 and 2. Inspection evidence indicates that achievement in these year groups is now satisfactory.

3. High quality teaching accounts for the rapid progress pupils make in their last two years in school. Though boys did not reach the same high standards as girls in Year 6 in 2003 this is

because, overall, more boys than girls had special educational needs. Boys, in fact, do as well or better than the school expects of them by the end of the year. The school easily exceeded its targets in 2002 and 2003, though the headteacher and deputy headteacher agree these were not pitched at high levels. Those for 2004 are much more challenging. The expectation is that 81 per cent of pupils will reach or exceed the expected level in English and mathematics and 96 per cent in science. Almost 50 per cent are on course to attain Level 5 in English and mathematics and 60% in science. This is very good achievement when pupils' previous results in Year 2 are taken into account.

4. Most pupils who have special educational needs achieve well. This is because the school quickly identifies any pupils who have special educational needs and takes appropriate action in assessing those needs, consulting with the special educational needs co-ordinator and adapting their teaching methods appropriately. Teaching assistants support pupils effectively and help them to persevere and develop independence.

5. Between Years 2 and 4, pupils sometimes underachieve in lessons because work is not matched well to needs and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are not managed effectively. The school knows that standards achieved in these year groups should be higher. That is why it has made achieving consistency with the quality of planning to meet the needs of pupils of different capability a key priority. Teamwork is directed at this and support from the LEA is sought to give staff every opportunity to cater appropriately for pupils in their care. Training is taking place to help teachers make sure their assessments are thorough and helpful to pupils. Teaching is being rigorously monitored by the headteacher and deputy headteacher and targets are agreed with staff as required to help ensure that pupils are managed so that they make the best of their capabilities.

## Key Stage 1

### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2002**

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.8 (14.2)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.1 (13.3)	14.4 (14.3)
Mathematics	15.2 (14.2)	16.5 (16.2)

*There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

## Key Stage 2

### **Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2002**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (27.5)	27.0 (27.0)
Mathematics	28.6 (27.0)	26.7 (26.6)
Science	28.8 (29.0)	28.3 (28.3)

*There were 26 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

## Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

6. **Provision for pupils' personal development is good.** The school has responded well to the previous inspection key issue to provide opportunities for pupils to take greater responsibility and show initiative in the day to day life of the school. It effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and cultural development is sound.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- New initiatives to encourage independence, self-discipline and involve pupils in taking decisions are having a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to learning, behaviour and relationships.
- Reception children benefit from the emphasis on personal, social and emotional development.
- Close links with the church, pupils' families and the wider community are helping to improve pupils' understanding and appreciation of religious and moral values.
- Educational visits and extra-curricular activities extend pupils' interest in learning.
- Some pupils still worry about bullying.
- Occasionally, lessons are unsatisfactory because behaviour is not managed well.

## Commentary

7. **Attendance** has improved since 2002 and is within normal bounds. For the year ending May 2003 authorised absence was 5.6 per cent and unauthorised was 0.2. Pupils arrive at school punctually and parents report reasons for keeping pupils out of school when they are ill. The school promotes good attendance by regular reminders of its importance and by a special award for a full term's attendance. A temporary exclusion was justified and it was not necessary to repeat this sanction again.

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002

Authorised absence (%)		Unauthorised absence (%)	
School data:	6.0	School data:	0.3
National data:	5.4	National data:	0.5

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background

### Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
155	1	0
1	0	0

*The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

8. Attitudes are good. In most lessons, pupils listen attentively, take part readily in discussions, and are keen to complete their work. Most pupils respond very well to adults' high expectations of them and their effort is generally purposeful, such as when the oldest pupils investigated local traffic issues. The youngest children settle quickly and the atmosphere in Reception is delightful. By Years 5 and 6, pupils display maturity beyond their years. They work reliably on their own and respond receptively to the classteacher, who involves pupils of different ability very well. Where attitudes and behaviour are less than satisfactory, this is because the tasks set do not motivate pupils to maintain a sufficiently high level of interest. In one physical education lesson, for example, there was inadequate attention to encouraging pupils to improve ball skills. The response of pupils with special educational needs deteriorated because they did not get enough positive feedback from the teacher.

9. Behaviour is good overall and is exemplary when pupils come together for assemblies. It is also often very good during lessons. The pupils themselves say that other children are becoming better behaved and friendly but some still have some worries about unkind behaviour. Whilst there have been isolated incidents of bullying, parents and pupils report that the school's handling of these is increasingly effective.

10. Relationships in the school are good and this is encouraging for pupils who have special educational needs, helping them to feel secure and promoting confidence and self-esteem. The work and attitudes of pupils who have special educational needs is carefully recorded, monitored and reviewed; this results in the school providing good opportunities for learning.

11. Daily assembly and special family services at the church reflect the school's strong Christian ethos. They are well organised, stimulating and promote pupils' spiritual development well. They provide regular moments for reflection. One such assembly about peace impressively involved the youngest pupils in a dramatisation of the story 'Peace at Last' and captured all pupils' attention. Pupils have a strong sense of fair play and awareness of conservation principles. They frequently discuss actions and beliefs that they believe are right and wrong during lessons and assemblies. They help establish class rules and participate in worthwhile schemes, such as re-cycling rubbish and raising funds for 'Water Aid'. Celebration assemblies on Fridays are very successful and pupils and parents look forward to them. This is because pupils identify with the house system and this assembly is the time when they share achievements and earn house-points.

12. Pupils are fully involved in trying to make school as happy a place as possible. They are encouraged to make suggestions and shoulder responsibility. For example, playtimes used to be a problem. Then the newly formed School Council was consulted and suggested solutions. Its class representatives persuaded adults to purchase more play equipment and enterprisingly even raised money towards it themselves. They also said that adults should implement school rules more fairly and staff responded positively by reviewing their practice. Supervision has, and is still being, improved. In a survey of their views, a high percentage of the sample group of pupils wrote that playtimes are now the time of day they like best! Pupils collaborate well for house activities, ably led by house captains. Monitors supervise the use of playground equipment at playtime, help operate the overhead projector in assemblies, look after registers and perform other useful tasks. The school has a 'chums' system that further encourages pupils to care for each other.

13. To foster both social and cultural development, the school runs a different club every day after-school. All of them are well attended. The performing arts club is very popular. Older pupils also enjoy French lessons and writing to a school in France. Sporting links with other schools are good. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 have opportunities to go on residential visits which parents say helps them to develop independence and self-confidence. Displays around the school, and topics about other countries, such as Mexico, soundly foster pupils' interest in cultural diversity. It is less clear, however, how the governing body monitors the provision for race equality or celebrates good relationships between pupils of different backgrounds. The last recorded racist incident was in May 2002 but governors did not report it to parents or state whether such incidents are reducing.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

14. The quality of education provided is sound. Previously reported shortcomings in the way the school caters for its higher-attaining pupils have been satisfactorily addressed.

### **Teaching and learning**

15. The quality of teaching provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are consistently good whilst in Key Stages 1 and 2 both are satisfactory. Assessment is sound overall and good in English and mathematics, though its use is not sufficiently effective in every class.

## Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	7	8	6	2	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching provides a high level of challenge in the mixed class of pupils from Years 5 and 6.
- Consistently good teaching in the Foundation Stage leads to good learning despite accommodation deficiencies.
- Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good and raises their self-esteem.
- The school has developed good assessment procedures in English and mathematics, though their use still requires consolidation.
- Teaching assistants help pupils to persevere with their work and become increasingly independent.
- Some teaching lacks authority in Years 3 and 4.
- Work in books indicates a lack of consistency in the quality of marking.
- There is inconsistent use of plenary<sup>1</sup> sessions to help pupils understand how well they progress.

### Commentary

16. Most teachers plan effectively. They have a clear understanding of what they want pupils to learn and how they should be taught. In the better lessons teachers make a brisk start, clearly outlining the lesson objectives and reviewing previous work so pupils become confident in their ability to progress. In less successful lessons pupils are restless and uninspired by the lesson content so their learning is limited. Where good teaching was seen, for example, in an English lesson in the mixed Year 2 and 3 class, teaching was based on very secure subject knowledge. The importance of trying was emphasised; making a mistake is all right as long as you give of your best.

17. In the very good lessons in the class of oldest pupils, teaching challenges pupils intellectually and creatively. This was evident in an art lesson as pupils confidently discussed the abstract style of Barbara Hepworth who they were studying as an inspiration for sculpture. They were able to apply their knowledge to their own work and were absorbed and challenged throughout the lesson. The plenary was very skilfully managed. Pupils eagerly volunteered positive and mature opinions about their work. This improved their ability to express preferences and appreciate the efforts of everyone else. This very successful plenary enabled the teacher to discretely assess pupils' progress and consider how to build on success in the next lesson. However this good practice in managing the end of lessons is not evident across the whole school and is an area for improvement.

18. Teachers consider carefully how to organise pupils for different classroom activities. They modify work, especially in English and mathematics, for pupils who have difficulties with their learning, placing pupils in groups where they can learn effectively. Teaching support staff are deployed well and are effective in encouraging pupils with special educational needs and lower-attaining pupils to tackle work and achieve well. Support staff are well informed and diligent in making sure pupils understand the tasks, gain full benefit from their lessons and become self-motivated and independent learners.

19. Pupils usually behave well in this school. Where teaching lacks direction or firm management, however, and the purpose of activities is not explained to pupils, they become confused and lack motivation. This results in unsatisfactory learning not only for those pupils who need specific

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<sup>1</sup> A plenary session is the discussion that takes place between teachers and pupils at the end of lessons.

behaviour management strategies but also for the rest of the class. This was evident in the mixed Year 3 and 4 class where some pupils' attitudes in physical education and English slowed learning. Where teachers are confident, have established effective classroom routines, and insist on mature behaviour, pupils concentrate and enjoy their work. They also work collaboratively and independently, respond well, enjoying the trust given by their teachers.

20. In Reception, regular assessments are made so all staff know what children can do and what they need to do next. The teacher and support staff manage children very well. Sharply planned teaching sessions balanced with a wide range of less formal activities are successful in helping children to achieve well in all areas of the curriculum, especially personal development.

21. Assessment procedures are good in English and mathematics and satisfactory overall for other subjects. Information about pupils' progress is gathered in a variety of ways, analysed and used to set targets to extend pupils' levels of achievement. The information has proved to be reliable, confirming the need to focus on spelling throughout the school in order to sustain rising standards in writing. A scrutiny of pupils' previous work shows, however, that some teachers lack skill in marking. Pupils say that it would be helpful to receive more comments about what they do well and how they can improve.

## **The curriculum**

23. The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Opportunities for enrichment through activities outside of lessons are good. Accommodation for children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory, and in particular makes supervision of children difficult.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Writing, speaking and listening are promoted well throughout the school. This is contributing to rising standards, especially in writing.
- 'Booster' classes for mathematics contribute well to standards that pupils reach in Year 6.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and based on a secure understanding of needs.
- Sport, drama and school productions enrich the curriculum and contribute well to pupils' personal development.
- Pupils prepare for secondary education very well, including learning French.
- Curricular planning is sound, but teachers do not make enough use of links between subjects.
- The design of the Reception classroom restricts children's access to a good learning environment.

## **Commentary**

23. Speaking and listening are promoted well in subjects, such as art and science, where pupils are encouraged to discuss their observations and feelings. A good example was in Year 2 as pupils shared ideas about the properties of the cake mixture with which they were working. Opportunities for writing are varied and interesting leading to rising standards in writing. For example, pupils practise summarising skills in recording key factual information about Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms. They adapt what they learn when studying St Paul's missionary journeys in religious education to write about what they would themselves take on holiday to places, such as Cyprus.

24. Additional booster classes in Year 6 help pupils to achieve well in mathematics. They allow pupils to be taught in two smaller groups, each closely geared to pupils' needs and abilities.

25. The school quickly identifies any pupils who have learning or behaviour difficulties and teachers take appropriate action, consulting with the special educational needs co-ordinator and adapting their teaching methods appropriately. Where pupils are sufficiently mature they are aware of the targets and after discussion with a teacher older pupils sign their individual plans to show their agreement to

do their best. Small groups of pupils are withdrawn to work on their social skills, very good progress being made in discussing positive feelings and understanding the impact on other people when negative remarks are made.

26. The school provides a stimulating programme of personal, social and health education from the time that children start school. Education about drugs' awareness is particularly good. This was clearly evident when two older pupils saw a discarded syringe near the school and immediately reported it to the headteacher, as they understood its potential danger. Visits and visitors play a big part. For instance, the visit of a guide dog and his owner inspired lots of thoughtful questions. The visit of a drama specialist, linked to work on the Vikings was particularly good at developing pupils' skills in working as a team as they re-enacted scenes about making a Viking longship. Pupils' self-confidence and self-reliance are further enhanced by opportunities to compete against other local schools in a range of sports tournaments and to take part in performances, such as an 'Old Time Music Hall'.

27. The school organises personal development in Reception very well with appropriate emphasis on settling children in and developing their confidence and respect for school expectations. There is also a very good programme of events to help pupils as they prepare for secondary education. Pupils learn French, taught by language specialists from the local comprehensive school. They visit the school for taster activities and to meet pupils from other primary schools. Members of staff meet regularly to ensure that the transfer of information between schools is smooth and efficient, enabling pupils to get off to a good start.

28. National strategies for literacy and numeracy, and other planning guidance following changes to the National Curriculum in 2000, have been securely implemented. However, apart from the development of literacy skills across the curriculum, links between subjects have not been fully exploited to make the best use of curriculum time. The headteacher, staff and governors are aware of this weakness and have recently produced a comprehensive school curriculum framework to help improve the way all subjects are planned.

29. Learning resources and school accommodation are satisfactory overall. Changes are planned to the Reception class but accommodation is currently unsatisfactory. At present lessons are disturbed by people walking through, as it is a main thoroughfare inside the school, and there is no ready access to an outdoor play area. Moreover, if learning support staff take groups of pupils to work elsewhere, it is very hard for the teacher to make good use of the remaining space because it is impossible to supervise the whole area adequately. The accommodation restricts the teacher's ability to use it flexibly and imaginatively.

### **Care, guidance and support**

82. The arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are satisfactory. Pupils receive good support and advice from teachers and non-teaching staff and recent initiatives to involve pupils in the school's work and development are working well.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has good child protection procedures.
- Pupils have confidence in the support, guidance and advice they have from staff.
- Induction arrangements for pupils are good, especially for children in Reception.
- The school acknowledges that its policy for health and safety requires updating and action is required to ensure that pupils are not put at risk from some windows opening at child level.

### **Commentary**

31. All matters relating to Child Protection are carefully managed, including training for all staff, the maintenance of up-to-date documentation and liaison with outside bodies. Pupils on the 'At Risk'

Register are carefully monitored and records of their progress are accurately recorded and well maintained.

32. Both teaching and non-teaching staff display a high level of concern for all pupils. Although their pastoral progress is not formally recorded, because staff know all pupils and have regular discussions about them, pupils' anxieties are identified quickly and staff respond appropriately. For example, pupils were encouraged to offer suggestions, via the School Council, for overcoming the problems they experienced at playtimes. This led to a happier atmosphere at lunch-time.

33. Pupils have good and trusting relationships with adults at the school. Pupils feel free to seek help, advice and support and report that they are happy at school most of the time.

34. The school gives good levels of support to pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are successfully integrated into the life of the school. The school monitors this group of pupils well and initial assessment is quickly followed up by individual education plans to make provision tailored to their learning needs. Regular reviews are held to ensure that pupils make progress. Parents and pupils are purposefully involved and the school has good relationships with the external agencies with whom it liaises.

35. The school does its best to give new pupils a good start at Cannington. Staff visit most nursery establishments prior to children being admitted to Reception. Meetings are held with parents in the summer term and children visit their classroom. Parents are allowed to stay with their children for the first days of school life and children settle very quickly into the routine because of the strong measure of help and support they receive.

36. Involvement of pupils through seeking and valuing their views is good. Pupils are pleased to be elected as members of the School Council, which meets regularly to discuss matters of school interest and how pupils can help others in the local and wider community. Pupils have been active, for example, in deciding how to raise money for charities and in evaluating the success of school rules and standards of behaviour.

37. The headteacher had concerns that the health and safety policy was out of date and that one part of the school building was ill designed for young children. The premises and buildings committee has very recently re-written the policy, but it has yet to be ratified by the governing body. The last formal LEA health and safety audit was carried out in July 2000 and the school is still awaiting action to address the potential hazard presented by a classroom window opening directly onto a former pedestrian access route. A new audit was arranged during the inspection.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

38. Links with parents and the community are good and the school has good mechanisms for the transfer of pupils from nursery to Reception and from Year 6 to high school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Written information to parents is predominantly good though reports on pupils' progress do not give sufficient detail.
- Links with parents are good overall.
- The school has particularly strong links with the feeder secondary school.

### **Commentary**

39. The school's links with parents are helpful to pupils. The school warmly welcomes them as partners and they help in a number of ways, including hearing pupils read, assisting on visits, making story sacks and attending special celebration assemblies. The school has eleven pupils who are Jehovah Witnesses and do not attend collective worship. Parent volunteers of the same faith organise and lead special reflection time for them when their peers are attending whole-school

assemblies. This is very good practice though the governing body does not fulfil its duty to inform parents via the Prospectus of the arrangements it makes when parents exercise their right to withdraw children from religious practices. Parents are also encouraged to help with homework and to participate in family services at the church. The 'family learning' weekend is another innovative attempt to further the potential of the partnership and to work even more closely with the Parent Teachers Association on ICT, drama and singing workshops. This is a real incentive to pupils to learn as part of a family group.

40. Information provided by the school is good apart from the production of end of year progress reports. The school brochure is well prepared, clearly written and gives full and interesting information about the policies of the school and its aims. Newsletters are regularly produced giving good information about activities promoted by the school and future events. The Governors' Annual Report to Parents is clear and concise and gives parents useful information, including a full financial statement. It is made available to parents at the school by request, but not automatically distributed. Reports are written at the end of the summer term but do not give sufficiently clear information to parents on what pupils have studied, grades awarded or targets for future learning. Parents say they would like to know more about how standards are assessed and how they can help at home. The school has already made arrangements to hold a training day for teachers about how to improve the quality of written reports.

41. Parents agree that they have open access to school. They find the headteacher approachable as she makes herself available in the playground each morning to meet parents. She regularly contacts them if the school has any cause for concern or praise they wish to give. The school actively consults parents about specific issues; for example, it sought their views and took them into account when introducing the Healthy Schools Initiative and the drafting of a new Mission Statement. Governors play their part too. For example, parents were invited to attend a meeting with the governing body to discuss the new positive behaviour initiative. Working parties have been formed to discuss its impact and parents have been invited to be members.

42. The school maintains close relationships with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are always invited to reviews of their statements and individual education plans. Increasing numbers of parents accept the invitation and become involved in setting realistic learning targets.

43. Links with the community and other educational establishments are very good. Pupils are very active in the community. They participate in a church service once per month. Pupils in Year 6 organised a Blue Peter 'bring & buy' sale for the benefit of the local community. The 'duck race' during the summer is very popular and attracts visitors from far and wide and senior citizens are invited regularly to school concerts. The school is an active member of a local consortium of schools that pool resources to provide curriculum enrichment for pupils, such as a visit by the Action Track Theatre Company.

44. Procedures for the transfer of pupils are very good. The school liaises extremely well with the receiving secondary school so that pupils feel able to start their new school with confidence. For example, pupils with special educational needs have their own specially planned visit accompanied by the co-ordinator for special educational needs.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

46. Leadership and management are good overall. The school is well led by the headteacher and her deputy, ably supported by others with management responsibilities. School management is good but governance is unsatisfactory. Some statutory responsibilities are not fulfilled rigorously and the governing body is not effective enough in monitoring and evaluating school improvements.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher and the deputy headteacher work very well together in setting the agenda for improvement.
- The headteacher has a very good view of what needs to be done in key areas and has made significant improvements in the short time that she has been in post.
- All staff share a strong commitment to improvement and work well as a whole-school team.
- Information about the school's performance is used well to decide priorities for improvement. However, the school improvement plan does not have clear enough ways of measuring the success of initiatives at each key stage in relation to the money spent on them.
- The governing body has been slow to revise and implement the health and safety and race relations' policies and is not fully effective in monitoring the success of the school improvement plan.

## Commentary

46. In the short time since her appointment the headteacher has identified weaknesses in teaching, assessment and the management of behaviour. With good support from her deputy, she has taken effective steps to address these weaknesses through the programme of performance management and staff training. Teachers have realistic professional development targets linked clearly to their own and school needs and these are carefully monitored by the headteacher and deputy headteacher, who seek help from the LEA attached inspector, when necessary. Teachers share a common purpose and commitment to improvement and there is a very strong team spirit. The programme of performance management successfully includes non-teaching staff. This is in recognition of the valuable contributions that all adults make to the quality of education.

47. Teachers with management responsibilities carry out their duties well. For example, the co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs supports colleagues very well in managing pupils with challenging behaviour. Good quality records of pupils' achievements are conscientiously maintained and used effectively in securing additional funding to support pupils' educational needs. The weekly formal meeting between the co-ordinator and support staff is an effective method of discussing pupils' progress, updating support staff on additional information and supporting staff development. The management of provision in the Reception class is very good. The teacher has maintained good provision despite difficulties in coping with the accommodation, and standards of work achieved by very young children who have only just started school are good.

48. The school improvement plan identifies key areas for development, such as improving tasks to meet the needs of all groups of pupils, including gifted and talented pupils, and increasing access to computers throughout the school. The very good work of the deputy headteacher in analysing performance data feeds directly into improvement planning, identifying areas, such as improving spelling and pupils' skills in solving problems in mathematics. Time scales for working towards development goals are clear, but cost implications and ways to measure the effect on raising standards where they most need to improve are not so well defined. However, the school has been prudent in spending over recent years. It therefore has significant reserves in hand to fund the planned and much-needed improvements to the school building. The school secretary controls the school finances very well and keeps meticulous records. Her work has been recognised by the LEA and used as a model of good practice.

49. The school has suffered because the governing body has faced particular difficulties since the previous inspection. A number of governors were unable to commit themselves fully to the role. Over the same period, the school experienced a number of staff changes. The transitions have not been easy to manage, and pupils in infant classes have suffered more than junior pupils. Some teachers found mixed-aged class groups difficult to manage and several changes of teacher affected pupils' confidence to learn. Despite these difficulties, the governing body has made astute appointments, notably those of the headteacher and her deputy, and new governors have recently replaced those who left. However, during the changeover too much responsibility rested with the Chairman and a few other governors, with an adverse effect on the governing body's effectiveness. They have maintained very good informal relationships with the incoming headteacher but because of other pressures on time and changing personnel, the governing body has not been able to keep fully

abreast of school developments and legislation. Governors do not yet have up-to-date policies for race equality and health and safety and do not automatically send out their annual report to all parents. Neither do they yet take an active enough role in addressing unsatisfactory teaching and guiding school improvement. However, governors are addressing the need to be more involved. They are already contributing by, for example, keeping close oversight of provision for pupils with special educational needs and improvements to accommodation.

***Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	463874
Total expenditure	452456
Expenditure per pupil	2522

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	56990
Balance carried forward to the next	68408

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

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

50. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good** even though weaknesses in the accommodation restrict curriculum planning in some areas, such as physical and creative development.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Consistently good teaching and learning stems from very good teamwork between the teacher and the support staff.
- There is a strong focus on language and personal skills, which leads to good achievement.
- The programme of induction works very well.
- Poor accommodation restricts teaching and learning.

#### **Commentary**

51. Children enter Reception with a wide range of different experiences and levels of attainment, though overall attainment on admission is average. By the time they leave, virtually all children achieve the early learning goals and are prepared well for the next stage in their education. Prior to arriving at the school, Reception children benefit from a well-structured programme of visits and a toy loan system that prepares them for school life. Regular joint activities, such as playtime and candle-time with pupils in Year 1, support an easy transition from Reception to the next class. The consistently good focus on encouraging lots of talk and co-operation results in all children becoming confident and enthusiastic about their learning. The teacher organises planning to make sure that there is a good balance within the curriculum to meet all needs and as a result children consistently achieve well. All adults manage children very well and children's progress is checked carefully and regularly. A particular strength is the effective system devised by the teacher to make sure support staff are fully aware of teacher expectations during the day and of any significant information that might affect children's ability to learn. The accommodation has distinct shortcomings, as described earlier in the curriculum paragraph. The teacher manages this far from ideal situation very well.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

52. Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children achieve very well because the well-planned induction programme gives them a feeling of security in their early days in school.
- Teaching encourages early independence; as a result children reach the expected standards with the majority exceeding them.

#### **Commentary**

53. At the time of the inspection children had only been at school for three weeks and the younger children were still attending on a part-time basis. Children all behaved very well as they were learning the classroom routines, for example, how to sit on the carpet ready for story-time and taking turns to play with toys and games. Adults gently encourage children to dress and undress independently for physical activities, giving lots of praise, boosting children's self-esteem and ensuring they try even harder. The teacher and assistants continuously model good behaviour and discretely defuse potential problems as they move children into different activities, encouraging them to be friendly and to show concern for each other. Whenever there is a class activity, such as counting games or

story, the teacher is very clear in her high expectations that children will listen and concentrate. This is done in a quiet but firm manner and the children respond very well. They want to please their teacher and they enjoy the interesting activities prepared for them. Children know when to sit quietly and when they can talk freely. They have very good opportunities to work together and enjoy sharing the 'office' equipment and investigating the water play area.

## **COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

54. Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There are good opportunities for children to interact and take part in conversations.

### **Commentary**

55. All children are on course to meet the early learning goals by the end of the year. This is because the consistently good teaching appropriately concentrates on helping children to understand that pictures and print can give information, and that children can also make written marks that mean something to others. Children learn to recognise and copy their own names and the previous Reception children could all write their names and form simple sentences by the end of the summer term. Children follow a story with their teacher and have great fun as they recognise rhymes and join in with animal noises in *Cock-a-Doodle Do*, understanding that when their teacher points to the big print it is their turn to join in and read. Children already know the writing on the cover is called a *title* and learn to examine the front cover of a book to find clues as to what or whom the story will be about. In the structured language lessons children respond well to the chances to talk about books and the story content. The more fluent children recall detail very well. Vocabulary and speech is further extended when children work more informally to re-enact stories and develop their imagination through play with puppets. This practice makes the development of speaking and listening very good for less confident children. The good teaching is characterised by effective teamwork. The support staff know exactly which children to work with and detailed assessment information means that all adults know what individual children have achieved and what their next learning step will be.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

57. Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Well-organised practical activities successfully encourage full participation from all children.

### **Commentary**

57. Children learn to count; they discover that if you count a line of ten onions from left to right, there are still ten onions when you count from right to left. All the children join in enthusiastically when they count cuddly toys and one child observes that the line gets 'shorter' when toys are removed. Finger puppets are used to good effect and children join in with number rhymes, such as *Ten Fat Sausages*, eagerly looking forward for their own turn to hold a puppet. Adult-led activities include a game for pairs of children to roll a dice, recognise numbers and count out pennies, and throwing beans into a bucket, counting and checking their successes. Throughout these activities adults encourage discussions and promote very well the personal skills of turn taking and courtesy to each other. A wide range of play is available and children further increase their mathematical understanding when they use containers in water to see how many items can be added before the container sinks. Records show children can match pictures to objects, understand 'more than' and 'less than', recognise symmetrical shapes, and 'share' objects before they leave the Reception

class. Photographs provide a record of children using oil-based dough as they learn to make solid shapes, such as cones and cylinders.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

58. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision and standards.

59. Photographic evidence shows that children benefit from a wide range of experiences, including bulb planting, celebrating Christmas, Chinese New Year and Divali. There are regular visits, such as to the zoo, supermarket and farm. Children in Reception at the time of inspection were curious, showing an interest in their surroundings. They were happy to participate in any of the practical activities available.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

60. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards.

61. Effective interactions between adults and children in a physical education lesson resulted in children becoming more independent in preparing for the lesson. Children have very positive attitudes and achieved well in exploring different ways of moving around the hall and becoming aware of their personal body space. A strength of the lesson was that children knew exactly what they had achieved and were pleased with their efforts. A shortcoming in the accommodation is that children do not have direct access to the outdoors and this restricts their use of it.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

62. It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards.

63. Planning indicates children will have a wide range of creative opportunities to explore media, enjoy singing and making music. Children play co-operatively, enjoy dressing up and role-play and are eager to show their teacher and parents pictures they have made.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

### ENGLISH

64. The provision in English is **good** having been soundly sustained since the previous inspection.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 is resulting in rapidly improving standards. In particular, 'booster' classes work well.
- Literacy is promoted effectively across the curriculum, particularly speaking and listening and writing.
- Teaching support staff help lower-attaining pupils to achieve as well as possible.
- Some teaching does not challenge or motivate pupils so their learning becomes restricted and pupils underachieve in their writing tasks.
- Lack of consistency in plenary sessions limits opportunities for assessment and for pupils to consolidate their new learning.
- Lack of consistency in marking means pupils are not fully informed about their achievements or the next stage in their learning.

#### Commentary

65. Above average standards and good achievement at the end of Year 6 is the result of the very good teaching for pupils in Years 5 and 6. In these year groups, teachers use assessment information well and this helps them analyse pupils' potential attainment and any gaps in their literacy skills and knowledge. The information is incorporated well into teachers' planning, and explains the rapid improvement pupils make between Year 2 and Year 6. Though national test results prior to 2003 show pupils in Year 2 as well below average, the recent results show a significant improvement with standards average in reading and above average in writing. The inspection findings confirm this improvement with pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 on target to achieve well and reach above average standards at the end of the year.

66. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall though they range from some unsatisfactory teaching to teaching of high quality. When teaching is effective or better, very good relationships and rapport between adults and pupils are typical. This makes all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, enthusiastic and eager to please, and results in high levels of achievement. For example, Year 2 pupils were eager to display their whiteboards with verbs written in the past tense, and wasted no time, moving very quickly to their new tasks. Similarly, pupils in Year 6 felt secure and sufficiently confident to ask for advice as they worked conscientiously to produce complex sentences. In both these classes the plenary is used effectively to share and discuss samples of pupils' work, and for the pupils to receive meaningful feedback which prompts enthusiasm in pupils to further improve their work. In classes where routines, such as working independently for a given time, and sitting attentively for the initial part of the lesson, have not been fully established, pupils become easily distracted and do not work to capacity. This results in unsatisfactory learning and achievement for pupils in the mixed Year 3 and 4 class.

67. Analysis of pupils' work from the previous year confirms the rising standards. However, though the range of activities is appropriate and in line with the national strategy for literacy, teachers' marking is inconsistent. The best marking clearly states what pupils have achieved, comments on their effort and states the next step in their learning. Less effective marking is limited to ticks and single word comments that lack incentive.

68. Teamwork is very good with the two subject managers having clear views of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. They liaise successfully with the assessment co-ordinator, and use the data analysis effectively. This results in well-organised assessment to track pupils' progress not only

through end of year tests but pupil portfolios, the 'First of the Month' assessment folders, and the managers' file of special pieces of work showing particular achievements. The imaginative management decision to use 'booster' funds to make smaller classes is an example of the school's determination to focus on raising standards. The recent results bear evidence of the success of this strategy. Pupils' literacy skills are further enhanced through the organisation of theatre visits, school performances and a visiting storyteller.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

69. The promotion of literacy skills across the curriculum is a strength of the provision in English. St Paul's missionary journeys and imprisonment, for example, are used to inspire imaginative writing in Year 3. Pupils in the lower junior age group, having visited a recycling plant, wrote about their experiences. A lower-attaining pupil was so enthralled by the visit that he described his 'amazement' at the size of the tip. Throughout lessons teachers encourage pupils to talk, read aloud, listen to each other and express their feelings. This accounts for the high standards in speaking and listening achieved by the time pupils leave Year 6.

### **MATHEMATICS**

70. Provision in mathematics is **good** with satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and pupils achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good in Year 1, Year 5 and Year 6.
- The creation of an additional class in Year 6 for the second half of the school year has a good impact on standards reached.
- Not enough use is made of learning targets in planning work.
- Plenary sessions at the end of each lesson are not always used well enough to assess learning.

#### **Commentary**

71. Year 2 pupils are on target at this early stage to reach average standards by the end of the year and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils are developing a sound understanding of tens and units, addition and subtraction. Many can already work out sums, such as  $63 + 21$ . Pupils recognise and name familiar shapes, such as squares and circles and they measure in metres and centimetres. Pupils' standards at the start of Year 6 are above average. They are once more on target to reach above average results in the end of year tests. Pupils achieve well despite relatively slow progress in lower junior year groups. Most of the oldest pupils already calculate accurately with whole numbers and decimals, they understand the metric system of measurement and have a sound knowledge of angles. A small number of lower-attaining pupils do not fully understand place value and consequently make errors in written calculations that depend on it.

72. Teaching and learning is sound and pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Teachers explain work well and where teaching is most effective they have high expectations. For instance, skilful teaching built well on pupils' knowledge of multiplication tables to find equivalent fractions, such as  $15/20$  and  $3/4$ . By the end of the lesson, nearly all pupils had a good understanding of the process, although a few whose recall of multiplication tables is less secure struggled with harder examples. Work was demanding and achievement was good. Over the longer term, pupils in Year 1, Year 5 and Year 6 make good progress because work makes increasing demands on them, teaching is varied and extensive samples of work show that pupils work hard. In other years there is less variety in teaching approaches and work is not as demanding.

73. The deployment of an additional teacher in Year 6 for the second half of the school year enables the class to be taught in two smaller ability-based groups. Test data and other records of

progress are used well to assign pupils to the appropriate group. As a result, teachers are better able to match work to the needs of pupils, and because the groups are relatively small, support for individual pupils is improved. All pupils benefit, but the arrangement is particularly successful in allowing pupils of higher ability to achieve their potential.

74. Learning support staff work closely with small groups of pupils with special educational needs, and sometimes at an individual level. They are sensitive to pupils' needs and are very good at helping pupils to behave well and to maintain concentration. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result.

75. In one class, reference to learning targets and good marking ensure that pupils are very clear about their progress in understanding addition and subtraction so far this term. However, good practice like this is not typical of all classes, although teachers assess work regularly and maintain good records of progress. Lessons are well organised, although over-long introductions sometimes lead to pupils fidgeting and losing attention. Teachers share lesson objectives with their class at the start of each lesson. Few, however, make enough use of them at the end to enable them or pupils to assess thoroughly what has been learned and the progress that has been made.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

76. Pupils make satisfactory use of numeracy skills in other lessons. For example, in ICT, pupils explore simple spreadsheet models that require the use of formulae. In science, in Years 5 and 6 they record the results of experiments in tables or analyse and describe what they learn from graphs. Older juniors also use their knowledge of scale in geography when reading maps.

### **SCIENCE**

78. Provision in science is **sound overall**, just as it was at the time of the previous inspection. Improvement since then has been satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are improving throughout the school and by Years 5 and 6 they are high.
- The subject leader has considerable expertise and his teaching provides colleagues with a very good role model from which to learn.
- Links with health education contribute very well to pupils' personal development.
- The quality of lesson planning and marking is variable and results in some pupils lacking sufficient understanding of what they need to do to make progress.
- The school improvement plan lacks sufficient evidence of the co-ordinator's clear vision for managing change and raising standards through the school.

### **Commentary**

78. Achievement is good overall yet not consistent in all classes. Pupils in Year 2 are likely to attain average standards by the end of the year and their achievement is satisfactory. Through a variety of good practical experiences in Years 1 and 2 now, they are developing good observation skills and the confidence to try to explain how things sound, move and grow, or how different materials are used every day. Pupils in Year 2 are acquiring precise scientific vocabulary and more able pupils used this knowledge well in a lesson as they described how certain ingredients change during cooking. This scientific knowledge is not as evident in their previous written work.

79. Pupils in Year 6 achieve very well to fully meet their potential. Very effective teaching has enabled higher attainers to reach advanced standards, with one pupil even obtaining a Level 6 in 2002, the target expected of sixteen-year-olds. In 2003, over 50 per cent of pupils obtained the advanced Level 5, a sign that they were being stretched, whilst two pupils with statements of special educational needs performed very well to attain a Level 3. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 cover an

impressive amount of work, much of it with the emphasis on investigation and working things out for themselves. It is very clear from scanning older pupils' work that every one of them is expected to work hard and do their best. Lessons are particularly demanding for the class that combines several pupils from Year 5 with all pupils in Year 6. The quality of dialogue is very good, because the teacher uses science vocabulary clearly and precisely. Links with mathematics are particularly strong as pupils use graphs and charts frequently to organise their findings. A very apt example was the work a higher-achieving group in Year 5 was doing to find out why the length of day and night changes over the course of the year. They plotted the times of sunrise and sunset on a line graph and then suggested and clarified explanations for the pattern created.

80. The co-ordinator's very good practice and sensitive leadership is having a positive impact on other teachers. He is promoting more demanding work for higher attainers and better assessment practice, in order to raise standards. He has addressed these issues through organising training for colleagues. As a result of his advice and support, the match to need is improving across the school, although is not yet consistently good in all classes. Teachers now plan activities that generally interest pupils. They make good use of teaching assistants to support pupils who need extra help and encouragement. For example, one helped pupils in Year 6 with special educational needs to construct line graphs, with due attention to labelling the axis and calculating the scale.

81. When lessons are stimulating, as most now are, pupils respond in a mature and thoughtful way to the tasks set. They often make relevant observations and discoveries about relationships based on every day life experiences. Subsequent writing is well organised and logical. One able pupil in Year 5, after testing a variety of materials, explained how she found out that foil is an ideal insulator, deducing that that is why athletes use it after a strenuous run to retain their body heat. In a lesson in Year 2, about how some materials change irreversibly, one girl gave careful instructions for making chocolate crispies whilst another provided a detailed explanation of what happens to eggs when fried and boiled. Both pupils were clearly aware of potential hazards and of health and hygiene requirements.

82. The main weaknesses are in the quality of planning for pupils of different capability and a lack of marking clearly focussed on the science content of the work. Work in books from last year was not marked well enough in all classes. For example, the more able pupils in Year 2 were not challenged to label diagrams clearly or to write in detail about the purpose of their investigations. Assessments at the end of topics were not rigorous enough, judging by the quality of written reports. The headteacher has drawn attention to this and is initiating a review of the marking policy, in order to support staff better.

83. Science is the selected focus for curriculum development and monitoring in the summer term 2004. The absence of targets and performance information in the school improvement plan, however, makes it difficult for governors to see where standards most need to improve by the time pupils are tested in May. It is unclear how they will monitor pupils' progress over the next two terms.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

83. Provision is **satisfactory**. Pupils' access to computers and the quality of teaching have improved since the last inspection, leading to rising standards.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Leadership is good. Specialist teaching and subject training has improved teachers' subject expertise.
- Pupils experience a good range of ICT learning opportunities. Good links are made with some other subjects.

### **Commentary**

85. There was sufficient evidence to judge that pupils have sound operating skills appropriate for their age. Older pupils are very confident and work with minimal support. Standards of work meet national expectations for pupils aged 7 and 11. Progress and achievement are satisfactory overall, but older more able pupils could do better. Too few lessons were seen to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning.

86. The ICT co-ordinator has recently returned to a full-time post at the school following a period of secondment. During that time she visited the school one day each week to lead teaching and to train teachers. She did this well. Teachers have become more confident and her good practice ensured that pupils received a well-balanced programme of activities appropriate for their age and previous experience.

87. Both lessons seen were good. Pupils in Year 2 created their own pictures based on 'Yellow Islands', by Jackson Pollack. The teacher taught new skills well and at the end of the lesson she used pupils' work effectively to recap what they had learned about Pollack's style and to compare it with earlier work in the style of Mondrian. In the other lesson, the teacher linked well the work that pupils had done on repeating patterns with current art lessons on printmaking. This approach is good because it combines learning in ICT and art simultaneously. Pupils behave well, they want to do well and work hard. Their good attitudes allow lessons to proceed at a good pace, and enable teachers and support staff to help pupils overcome minor difficulties without undue distraction.

88. Pupils have a sound understanding of data handling, computer modelling and control. Teaching in these aspects of ICT has focused so far on developing basic skills. Pupils in Year 2, for instance, know how to instruct a floor 'Roamer' to move round a simple obstacle course. Older pupils understand how to make lights and buzzers operate in pre-determined sequences and how to use a spreadsheet to communicate different ways to budget for a party.

89. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The school's computer room is adequately equipped, and plans are in place to extend the number of computers in classrooms. The quality of teaching has improved, largely through the efforts of the ICT co-ordinator, who has led training well, and standards have risen from below average to match national expectations. The school is well placed to move on and to build on its successes so far.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

90. Some good links are made with other subjects, for example, in art and in developing Year 2 pupils' writing skills through word processing work related to Easter. Year 6 pupils combine writing, pictures and sound well in attractive presentations on Kenya and the conquering of Mount Everest, including materials found on the Internet. Older, more able pupils have not, however, had sufficient opportunities to extend their learning, for example, exploring further the links between spreadsheets, the use of formulae, and problem-solving in mathematics. Consequently, they do not yet work to their full capacity. The co-ordinator is aware that pupils underachieve in this respect and the detailed subject plan, part of the school improvement plan, includes appropriate objectives for improvement.

### **HUMANITIES**

91. Judgements in the humanities are based on samples of pupils' work, one lesson in religious education, one lesson in geography, and dialogue with pupils and staff.

92. **Provision in religious education, geography and history is sound.** Teaching and learning are satisfactory in each subject, just as at the time of the previous inspection. Most pupils reach the levels expected for their age at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards achieved throughout the school are, overall, satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- All these subjects are now being used effectively to develop pupils' oral and literacy skills.

- In history and geography, there are good links with personal, social and health education.
- Visits or visitors often provide a good starting point for units of study.
- Geography has been a recent focus for improvement because the headteacher and co-ordinator realised that pupils were capable of higher standards in their written work.
- The use of numeracy and ICT in geography is not consistently good enough.

## Commentary

93. Since the new headteacher joined the school there has been a systematic review of provision in the humanities. Due attention has been given to evaluating what pupils should learn each year, how much time is necessary for the curriculum to be properly covered and where natural cross-curricular links can be made. There was evidence in earlier work from the previous academic year that tasks set were not always matched to pupils' capability. Therefore, pupils in some year groups did not consistently make the most of their skills in writing. This situation is being successfully addressed through the focus on improving writing.

94. In religious education, the school follows the locally agreed syllabus and pupils learn soundly about Christianity and other major world faiths. In the lesson seen, children in Year 1 responded positively to the opportunity to talk about special family occasions and the traditional celebrations of birthdays, Christmas, weddings and christenings. Pupils were interested to know that Jewish children have special clothes for their Bar Mitzvah. A strength of the teaching in religious education are the regular opportunities across the school for pupils to improve creative writing and this helps to explain pupils' rapidly improving results in writing. For example, last term's Year 3, having read about St Paul's imprisonment in religious education, wrote imaginatively about the confines of prison life. They empathised with the feelings of imprisonment and recorded the preparations for a personal journey. It was not possible to observe a lesson in Year 6 but a few pupils who talked with an inspector about religious education were well informed about Christian beliefs and customs and had a satisfactory knowledge of Islam and Muslims' customs. They were not, however, very enthusiastic about the subject. The school makes appropriate provision for the group of pupils who are Jehovah Witnesses.

95. Better planning has revitalised teaching and learning in geography, which was, until recently, inadequately organised. There is an obvious emphasis, in colourful displays around the school, like the one in the corridor about Islam, on pupils finding out about different people, places, their work, beliefs and customs. Teachers often now use lessons in geography to develop literacy and numeracy in meaningful contexts. There is a growing emphasis on the use of word-processing to help motivate pupils to write logically and creatively. Boys are responding well to this strategy. One lower-attaining boy in Year 4, for example, used bullet points effectively to describe six things he thinks would improve the school environment.

96. A strong feature of teaching in the humanities is the scope provided for pupils to develop speaking, listening and thinking skills. The two lessons seen were good in this respect, enabling pupils to achieve well. Pupils clearly thrive on discussing social and moral issues, and the quality of debate is high, such as when the oldest juniors were discussing a traffic survey they had conducted in the road outside the school. They seriously debated the question "Should the High Street be closed to traffic?" Other lesson activities are broad ranging and many are stimulating, a good example being the project 'Caring for the Environment', a contributory factor to the school winning the Healthy Schools Award in 2002. This topic obviously appealed strongly to pupils, including those with special educational needs in Years 3 and 4. One boy, who normally wrote very little that was meaningful, communicated his new learning very well as he explained "I thought the man from the re-cycling centre was interesting. I found out that the size of the rubbish dump equals 200 football pitches." Similarly, the same year group's quality of writing about the Vikings was enhanced by their dramatic simulation of moving life-like models displayed at the Yorvic museum in York.

97. Judging from pupils' past work, some features of teaching have shortcomings. Some work is too easy and pupils could achieve more if teachers planned more precisely for their needs. An able pupil, for example, coped easily with sorting and classifying different kinds of refuse. Then this pupil

made a graph to show how much had been collected over three weeks. This pupil was not challenged to find out the total weight or to work out the average, even though she/he had the mathematics skills to calculate both. Pupils have made inadequate use of ICT to communicate findings through charts and graphs rather than text.

98. The leadership and management of these three subjects are soundly delegated. The teachers in charge collect samples of work from each topic and are building up a reliable quantity of evidence of standards achieved. This is helping to pinpoint strengths and areas for development. The school improvement plan, for example, contains appropriate objectives to enable pupils to exploit further the potential of ICT over the course of the coming year. Plans are also well in hand to ensure a consistent approach to assessing progress and encouraging all pupils to achieve as well as they can. At present subject plans lack ways of measuring success that would make progress with new initiatives easy to measure.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

99. Provision in art and physical education is **good** and **satisfactory** in design and technology and music. There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement of standards achieved, teaching and learning, in design and technology, music, and physical education. Those judgements that were possible are based on samples of pupils' work, one lesson in art, one games lesson, two lessons in music, dialogue with pupils and staff, and scrutiny of the curriculum framework.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses in art**

- Standards achieved in art have improved during the past two terms because it was a successful focus for curriculum development during the summer term.
- Pupils produce imaginative work based on the style of famous artists and sculptors.

### **Commentary**

100. Through the process of school self-evaluation, teachers decided that they needed to radically revise the art curriculum because they were not satisfied with standards achieved. Consultants with relevant expertise led a training day from which teachers gained confidence. Teachers now plan well for progressive development of knowledge and skills. Pupils' good achievement is celebrated effectively through a variety of striking displays in different parts of the school, including pictures produced on computer using special art software. Though standards are broadly average, pieces of individual work represent the full range of capability. All are attractively mounted showing that the school uses the subject to subtly promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development. One display board, for example, shows work produced in pastels, chalk and paint based on famous artists. The attention to fine detail, colour and scale is good in all of them. One classroom for the oldest juniors contains a visually stimulating array of pictures and information about the different styles of modern sculpture inspired by the human and abstract form. The pupils' abstract art, displayed alongside, is carefully crafted, faithfully incorporating many of Barbara Hepworth's techniques.

101. A random group of pupils who participated in the questionnaire nominated art as their favourite subject. This is a testament to some very good teaching that was strongly reflected in the one lesson observed with pupils in Years 5 and 6. With skilful guidance from their teacher, pupils made very good progress with their own sculptures and learnt how to critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in one another's products. Their pride in achievement was high.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses in music**

- The part-time music specialist teacher has good musical expertise. Lessons are well planned.
- Year 6 girls sing well and standards are up to expectation.
- School musical performances contribute well to pupils' personal development.

## Commentary

102. Lessons seen were a good combination of performing, listening and composing. The Year 1 lesson was interesting and demanding. Pupils achieved well and standards were above average for their age. They recognised simple rhythms based on crotchets and quavers ('Os-car Hen-ri-ett-a' and similar), they knew the names of instruments, such as cymbals and explored the sounds that they can make. Levels of motivation were good throughout because teaching was brisk. The lesson in Year 6 started well with rehearsal of a three-part composition consisting of a sung melody and two spoken, rhythmic parts. Performance was secure because the teacher led the performance well. Although again well led, singing later on in the lesson was less successful. Girls sang well, in tune and with good expression, but boys were very reluctant to join in.

103. All pupils take part in regular school performances, such as a Victorian 'Old time Music Hall'. They clearly enjoy the experience and work hard. These opportunities develop well pupils' self-confidence and team spirit, and make a valuable contribution to their personal development.

## Main strengths and weaknesses in physical education

- Opportunities for learning outside of the school day are very good.
- The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' self-esteem.
- Some teaching and learning suffers from weak class management.

## Commentary

104. The school offers an impressive range of activities out of school time that are highly popular with pupils and very well attended. In doing so, the school collaborates effectively with its feeder secondary school, other schools and community organisations in the locality. For example, 20 pupils from Years 5 and 6 are currently involved in the new County initiative 'Playing for Success' at Taunton Cricket Club. They have responded enthusiastically to the opportunities that the venture offers to enhance their individual talents. The school's own programme of clubs includes netball, football, tennis, rounders, table tennis, athletics and cricket. In addition, junior pupils learn outdoor sports like abseiling during a four-day residential course at an education centre.

105. Pupils speak well of teaching. However, the one lesson observed was unsatisfactory because pupils were not sufficiently encouraged to concentrate, observe good practice and learn from each other. Most pupils were overexcited, too casual and got away with underachieving.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

107. Provision in personal, social and health education is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The 'Healthy Schools' initiative resulted in some imaginative teaching and learning.
- There are good links between national curriculum subjects and PSHE. Pupils explore many different issues that unite and divide people, and learn to contribute positively to society.
- Pupils are not experienced enough at setting personal goals and checking their own progress.

## Commentary

107. The school deserved the special awards it won for promoting a healthy lifestyle and developing a young enterprise scheme. Both initiatives were well organised and linked productively with learning in science, design and technology, physical education and the humanities. They enabled pupils to make effective use of literacy, numeracy and ICT as they explored relevant issues. These included finding out about how to identify, prepare and eat a balanced diet, how to keep fit and healthy, safe on the roads and in the home. Pupils receive many opportunities to visit the world of

work and to listen to people who have the expertise to offer them prudent advice about how to care for themselves and each other. Pupils acknowledge how helpful this advice is with respect to understanding the dangers of drugs when not properly prescribed. They are well informed about drug and alcohol abuse as their writing and actions demonstrate.

108. Pupils are also gaining valuable understanding of democracy and problem resolution. The revitalised house system and the new School Council have provided worthwhile opportunities for pupils to learn about how to elect individuals as leaders or to represent their points of view. Pupils respect their house captains and council members because of the mature and thoughtful ways in which they manage their responsibilities. They acknowledge, for example, the difference having a voice is making to the way in which they are treated, at playtimes.

109. Innovative ideas, such as the formation of a nurture group and a circle of friends, are helping pupils share and deal with personal problems. Pupils are pleased with the systems of rewards and sanctions because they had a say in deciding them. Pupils know they work as the number of incidents of poor behaviour has reduced considerably.

110. Pupils with special educational needs are becoming used to setting small targets for improvement in their behaviour or ability to concentrate. This helps them learn. However, not all pupils are accustomed to doing this. Pupils say they want more specific help from teachers, especially through their written comments in exercise books.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	4
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*