

INSPECTION REPORT

**EVERCREECH CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Shepton Mallet

LEA area: Somerset

Unique reference number: 123755

Headteacher: Mr Keith Jarvis

Lead inspector: Mrs Deborah Zachary

Dates of inspection: 6th – 8th October 2003

Inspection number: 256084

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:	151
School address:	Paradise Crescent Evercreech Shepton Mallet Somerset
Postcode:	BA4 6EH
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Hilary Foster
Date of previous inspection:	22 nd October 2001

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school serves the village of Evercreech with surrounding hamlets, but a significant minority of pupils travel from the nearby town of Shepton Mallet. Overall, the pupils' socio-economic backgrounds are comparatively disadvantaged. Almost all the pupils are from white British backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. The standards of pupils who enter the school in Reception are improving, and this year attainment on entry is about average. However, the standards of previous Reception groups, including pupils now in older year groups, were below average at entry. Furthermore, more pupils than usual join the school or leave it between Reception and Year 6, and those arriving, overall, have had standards lower than those who left. The number of pupils with special educational needs is above average. Though none have statements of special educational needs, some require and receive levels of support usually associated with statements. Special needs include communication difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, some moderate or specific learning difficulties, and some general developmental delay.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2940	Deborah Zachary	Lead inspector	Science, information and communication technology, design and technology
9756	Ken Parsons	Lay inspector	
28014	Peter Buckley	Team inspector	English, mathematics, music, special educational needs
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Evercreech is a sound school that is improving and gives satisfactory value for money. It no longer has serious weaknesses and is being led and managed satisfactorily. Teaching is good, as is the achievement of younger pupils; the older ones had some catching up to do, and their achievement is satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Achievement is good for pupils in Reception and Years 1 and 2; it is particularly good in information and communication technology in Years 1 and 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for – the school's investment in support staff is paying off and the pupils are making good progress.
- A strong Christian ethos permeates the school, and the children are well cared for, but they do not learn enough about other cultures in Britain.
- Assessment is good in English, so pupils know where they are and how to improve, but it is not good enough in science and is only just developing in some other subjects. This means the school cannot fully track pupils' progress.
- Teaching is good now, but standards in Years 3 to 6 could be higher if tracking of pupils' progress was fully used to target areas that are weaker.
- The headteacher has ensured there is a shared determination to improve among his staff, but some subject managers now need to be more directly involved in monitoring.

The school responded well to the key issues in the last inspection report. The headteacher put in a very effective programme of monitoring and support for teaching and this has improved very well. There has been satisfactory improvement overall in the last two years, and much has been done, but the planned programme is not yet complete and results in Year 6 have yet to show sustained improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	D	D	E	C
mathematics	C	C	E	D
science	E	B	B	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 in the school.

Although the 2003 Year 6 results were below those of 2002, the 2003 pupils had entered Year 3 with lower attainment than those of 2002. Their low attainment on entry is why the grades for 'similar schools' are better than those for 'all schools'. Their achievement was satisfactory, and better than the year before. The standards of the current Year 6 are below average overall, but achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. After a period of slow progress, when achievement was unsatisfactory, the pupils are now achieving well in their lessons. Pupils with special needs are achieving better than others in English and mathematics, because of the sustained support they are getting. However, standards remain below average in English, mathematics, design and technology and information and communication technology, because some aspects of these subjects are weaker than others.

Standards in Year 2 are average, and achievement is good in Years 1 to 2. It is very good in information and communication technology, where standards are high. Standards are average in Reception and last year most attained the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception. The children are doing particularly well in their personal, social and emotional development.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are developed well. Attitudes are good, and behaviour and attendance are satisfactory. Behaviour is good in class, but can be more boisterous in the playground.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good, and teaching is good. Lessons are clearly planned and support staff are closely involved, contributing well to the good learning of the pupils. What the pupils can do is assessed well in English and the pupils know what they are trying to improve. In other subjects, where assessment is not formally recorded, teachers tend to react on the spot to pupils' answers, often supporting or challenging well with questions but not always having carefully targeted work ready to provide. Assessment is good for children in Reception, and they have a wide range of learning opportunities. The good links with the pre-school group give them a good start in the school. Links with the church contribute well to the curriculum in the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leadership is satisfactory overall, but there is a good sense of purpose and subject leadership is good in many areas, with co-ordinators planning well and showing enthusiasm. The work of the governing body is satisfactory, with governors showing good challenge and support to senior managers. Management is satisfactory overall. Though monitoring of teaching is good, analysis of progress using results data is not yet helping development and informing decisions of senior managers, curriculum managers or governors. Financial management is good, but the governing body has not met its responsibility to provide and monitor a race equality policy. Although inclusion is good, the school does not promote good race relations through ensuring pupils have a good understanding of Britain as a multicultural society.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are well satisfied with the school. They feel their children like the school and are expected to work hard. They appreciate the care given to children when they start at the school. They gave few negative views. On questionnaires there was some dissatisfaction with homework, but some of those dissatisfied wanted more and some less. The homework is satisfactory.

Pupils also show good levels of satisfaction. They feel they are helped by teachers with their work or if they are worried. They feel they are listened to. They like the school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue to raise standards by Year 6 in English, especially in speaking and listening, in mathematics, in information and communication technology and in design and technology.
- Give co-ordinators a greater management role, and improve managers' understanding of data analysis and its use to plan for improvement.
- Implement the planned assessment systems for subjects other than English and mathematics, and set targets in mathematics
- Make better provision for pupils understanding of Britain as a multicultural society.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- Finalise and monitor a Race Equality policy.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is a measure of how well pupils are doing, taking their progress and their capability into account.

Achievement is satisfactory overall, though standards are below average by the time pupils leave the school. Achievement is good for pupils in Reception and in Years 1 and 2, and it is good throughout the school for pupils with special educational needs.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with special needs are achieving well, because of the sustained support they are getting.
- The pupils are now achieving well in their lessons, but older ones have not made enough progress in the past. Their standards remain below average in English, mathematics, design and technology and information and communication technology.
- Standards are high in Year 2 in information and communication technology, and achievement is very good.
- Pupils have below average speaking and listening skills and this is holding back their literacy development.

Commentary

1. The current pupils in Reception have only just started at the school. Their current standards are average, but they are achieving well in lessons in response to good teaching, and early signs are that they will exceed the standards reached by Reception pupils last year. These pupils, now in Year 1, reached average standards at the end of Reception. Almost all met the early learning goals in five of the six areas. A majority met these goals in communication, language and literacy, but standards were lower here than in the other areas.

The tables shown in this commentary give average points scores for pupils. Each level in the national curriculum is given a number of points. Pupils are expected to move on one point every term, so if a school's scores are one point above the national, their pupils are, typically, a term ahead.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.7 (15.0)	15.9 (15.8)
writing	14.5 (15.0)	14.8 (14.4)
mathematics	17.1 (18.1)	16.4 (16.5)

There were 24 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The 2003 results for Year 2 were average overall, but above average in mathematics. Teacher assessments in science were broadly average. When the results and teacher assessments are compared to schools with a similar number of free school meals, they are above average, which indicates that achievement was good last year. Current standards in Year 2 are average overall, but are high in ICT. Pupils are still achieving well, and particularly well in ICT. This good achievement reflects the good teaching seen on the inspection for Years 1 and 2, a very good improvement since the last inspection.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.3 (25.9)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	24.9 (26.7)	27.0 (26.7)
science	29.4 (29.5)	28.8 (28.3)

There were 28 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Although these results are below average overall, they are average compared to schools with similar numbers of pupils on free school meals and above average compared to schools that obtained similar scores in 1999, when the pupils took Year 2 tests. A detailed study of how well the pupils who were in the school for the full four years performed indicates that achievement was satisfactory overall. It was very good in science, satisfactory in English (better in reading than in writing), but with some underachievement in mathematics.
4. Current pupils are also achieving satisfactorily overall. They achieve well in science and in religious education. They achieve well in lessons, generally, but improvements needed in assessment and associated target setting are restricting pupils and have prevented them from doing better over the longer term. Assessment and associated target setting have had some work done on them but are not yet satisfactory for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The result is that it is harder for the school to particularly target improvement to areas that are weaker, however good the teaching in class. The lack of assessment in science and ICT means that it is hard to monitor the progress of individuals, though achievement is boosted in science by the strong practical and investigative approach taken by teachers. The lack of target setting in mathematics means that pupils are not fully aware of what they are aiming to do. In ICT the area that needs most improvement is pupils' understanding of the use of ICT in school and the wider world. In mathematics, older pupils are not good enough at rapid mental calculation. In design and technology pupils are better at actually making things than evaluating them and reflecting on their purpose.
5. Assessment and target setting have been in place long enough to have an impact on reading and writing in English, and are improving achievement. One of the factors holding back further improvement in that subject is pupils' weaker speaking and listening skills. Conversely, one of the factors boosting achievement is the good provision for pupils with special educational needs. This is at its best in English, but these pupils are also achieving well in mathematics and religious education.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are good and behaviour is satisfactory. Their spiritual, moral and social development are good and their cultural development is satisfactory, making these aspects of their personal development good overall. Their attendance and punctuality are both satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' good attitudes to their learning help them to achieve well, because they enter lessons wanting to learn.
- Personal and social development in the Reception class is very good.
- Although relevant issues such as racism and bullying are dealt with successfully in the school's provision for personal, social and health education, the cultural diversity of this country is not celebrated as much as it could be.
- Overall, behaviour, which is good within the school, is affected by some boisterous behaviour from a small number of pupils on the playground.

Commentary

6. The pupils listen attentively in lessons and enjoy their learning. Nearly all, including those with special educational needs, want to learn and succeed. Occasionally, there is off-task chat from a small number of boys in particular, but this is halted by teachers. Pupils usually co-operate well and understand the need for teamwork, working together constructively and sharing resources. They are generally interested in their work, as seen during their *Literacy Challenge* in Year 4/5, when interesting challenging puzzles are set each morning. Attendance by pupils is broadly in line with the national average. The school has good procedures to monitor pupils' absences and parents usually co-operate well by contacting the school when their child is absent. Holidays during term time are discouraged by the school but are a factor in the attendance figures. Pupils and parents say pupils enjoy coming to school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.1	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.

7. Behaviour is very good when pupils come together for assemblies. Behaviour in class and in the hall at lunchtime is mostly good. Some older pupils find it hard to settle, particularly when in the ICT suite, but they respond to their teachers. Out in the playground there are isolated incidents of bullying, but staff deal with these quickly and effectively. A small amount of boisterous behaviour, by boys in particular, takes place on the playgrounds and, although this is checked by adults, it continues to be evident.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	149	2	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0

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

8. Pupils respond well to the school's provision and parents agree that it leads to greater maturity as they move through the school. They become familiar with the school's expectations and the strong Christian ethos and philosophy which are within the school. There is a willingness to be enterprising, such as participation in *Apple B Enterprises* which raise money for charities. A sense of responsibility is cultivated and Year 6 pupils take care of younger pupils on the playground. The pupils agree that they are generally trusted to do things on their own. Children make a very good start in the Reception class and their personal development is above average by the end of the year. Pupils with special educational needs are very well accepted by all pupils. They work well with their teaching assistants in classes and are included in all school and class activities.
9. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. Staff are good role models, showing respect and concern for the individual needs of all pupils and taking their views seriously. A strong feature of the school's moral development is through assemblies. For example, an Aesop's Fable was told, which has a strong message that you need to contribute to the work

involved to share the result. This was related to the pupils' own home environment and pupils were asked to reflect upon whether they help enough at home.

10. The school is very much part of the church family with clearly stated aims to develop self-discipline and a sense of responsibility and to have tolerance of others. Assemblies provide good opportunities for the pupils to pray and reflect. In particular they foster a strong sense of belonging to a whole school community. Candles are lit and used well to foster a spiritual dimension. Through studies in religious education, teachers openly explain beliefs and customs with confidence. An example was a lesson where festivals of other faiths had been studied and were being compared with the main Christian church festivals, such as the imminent Harvest Festival. The result is that pupils have a good awareness of the differences in cultural beliefs, and this is also supported by the well-established links with schools and pupils from abroad. The pupils' awareness of Britain as a multicultural society is satisfactory, but it is not supported well. For example, displays around the school do not reflect the multicultural dimension of this country. During pupil interviews, they reflected concern and tolerance for those of different cultures and showed good respect for the feelings and emotions of others, but they were less aware of the positive features of living in a multicultural society. Cultural provision is greatly enhanced by a wide range of out-of-school visits and visitors. There are residential trips and additionally all Year 6 pupils attend a service day at Wells Cathedral, which incorporates art, music and drama as well as exploring faith.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching is a particular strength though it is not fully supported by assessment systems. The numbers of support staff and the care given to children are also strengths.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good. Assessment is satisfactory overall, good in Reception but unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are clearly planned and members of the support staff are closely involved, contributing well to the good learning of the pupils.
- What the pupils can do is assessed well in English and the pupils know what they are trying to improve.
- In other subjects, where assessment is not formally recorded, teachers tend to react well to pupils' answers, often supporting or challenging well with questions but not always having carefully targeted work ready to provide.
- The good assessment in Reception is reflected in good detailed lesson planning that aims to meet the needs of pupils of different standards.
- Though practical activities and the use of resources are usually good, ICT is not used well to support learning in the classroom.

Commentary

During the inspection two classes were being taught by temporary staff because of staff illness. This meant that observations of teaching in these classes were not necessarily representative, and judgements were supplemented by examining work and talking to pupils.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2 (6%)	21 (68%)	7 (23%)	1 (3%)	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

The unsatisfactory lesson was in science but was not representative of work normally carried out with the class. It resulted from a teacher covering a colleague's absence at very short notice without the time to reflect on lesson plans already made.

11. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection when the majority of lessons were satisfactory and more than ten per cent were not good enough. Most of the particular weaknesses, for example control of behaviour, have been improved very well. Records show that the improvement has been closely associated with feedback given from the headteacher's monitoring, whether to individuals or as a stimulus for discussion in staff meetings. There is now an appropriate agreed statement about what constitutes good teaching and learning. The pupils agree strongly that they learn new things in lessons and that they have to work hard, and most find lessons interesting and fun.
12. Lessons are planned clearly and pupils are usually told what they are going to learn, which involves them well. Teaching assistants and SEN support staff are well aware of the aims and the activities to take place. This is particularly effective in Reception, where all adults intervene well to guide the children towards the aim of the session. However, throughout the school support staff take an active part, and they use their time wisely, for example making notes of pupils' progress or responses during a time when Year 1 pupils were sitting listening to the teacher. They take a small group of pupils during lessons, or work with individual pupils to support them. Small group sessions outside the classrooms, for pupils in need of extra support, were effective whether taught by teachers or support staff. In one very well taught small group lesson, for Year 3/4, the key strength was in the questioning that encouraged the pupils to work out how to improve for themselves, which was highly motivating and raised their self-esteem. The school made a management decision to maintain comparatively high levels of support staff, and they are effective in the contribution they are making to pupils' achievement.
13. Resources are generally used well, and particularly well in a very good Year 1 lesson of ICT, which took place in the network room. In the foundation stage, practical activities stimulate the children and support their learning well. In science, too, the emphasis on well-devised practical activities helps pupils to keep their interest and concentration and take an active part in the lesson. In a history lesson with Years 3 and 4, a pupil was effectively used as a resource, pretending to be Henry VIII and taking questions from the others. However, teachers do not make enough use of computers as a resource in the classroom to support work on an ongoing basis in other subjects. This has an impact on their understanding of the use of computers in Years 3 to 6.
14. The pupils' work is assessed and marked in accordance with the marking policy and the pupils understand what nearly all the symbols mean. It is more effective in some subjects than others. For example, the code *sp* used to correct spelling is frequently applied to English work, but is seldom used in marking in other subjects. It is not always helpful to a pupil to correct every spelling, and the code *QM* (quality mark), used to show when a piece of work has been marked in detail, should be an effective method of approach. However, though older pupils are familiar

with most codes used, those interviewed were not able to say how they could tell whether a piece of work is fully correct or whether spellings have not had a focus from the teacher. Comments are used, but could be used more to tell older pupils how to improve.

15. Pupils' work is assessed thoroughly in English and mathematics. Results of assessments are used to track progress in English where group targets are then set. Pupils are well aware of these and find them helpful. No individual targets are set, and no group targets are set in subjects other than English. In most subjects, assessment systems are at an early stage of development, so here the teachers do not have the data to plan much different work for different groups of pupils in the class – different level work based on what the pupils already know. Instead they tend to plan for work of broadly one level, using the effective teaching assistants staff to support lower attainers, and using good questioning skills to challenge higher attainers orally. This becomes harder and less appropriate the older the pupils are, because standards vary more widely. The contrast between English and mathematics, on the one hand, and science, on the other, was evident, for example, in three lessons seen in Year 5. Here the main part of the English and mathematics lessons were challenging for all abilities because tasks of different difficulty were set to different groups. In science, even with one-to-one support, some of the lowest attainers found the task they were given too hard.

The curriculum

There is a satisfactory curriculum in the school, and it is good in the Reception year. There are satisfactory opportunities for enrichment, for example through extra-curricular activities in sport and music. The accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum adequately overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum in the Reception year is well planned – it is broad and balanced and practically orientated.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, especially for literacy development.
- The number of support staff is high, and they are well used so that they make a good contribution to the pupils' achievements
- Though there is a network room, there are not enough computers in the classrooms and computers are not used enough in classroom lessons.

Commentary

16. In the Reception class – the foundation stage – the curriculum is well resourced in terms of staffing, accommodation and learning resources. With 18 pupils and two members of staff, learning is practically oriented and adults can be quick to intervene to move pupils on. Planning is clear and ensures that all areas of learning receive the right emphasis. The practical bias is echoed in science lessons further up the school, where the strong attention given to scientific investigation and practical experiments helps pupils to understand their work as well as enjoy it.
17. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is also well planned. Their individual education plans have clear targets that all understand. They are largely taught with their peers, but receive some teaching in small withdrawn groups, largely to supplement their literacy, and this is effective. The good management of the co-ordinator for special educational needs (SENCO) ensures that where necessary the pupils receive specific support from outside agencies, including pupils recorded as being at the *school action* stage (rather than *school action plus*, where outside support is a necessary part). Pupils with special needs receive the same entitlement to ICT as other pupils, but they do not use ICT for additional support in their learning.
18. Numbers of support staff are high, which is a well-planned use of funds. This is effective as support staff are making a significant contribution to pupils' achievement, not just in Reception

or for pupils with special educational needs, but throughout the school. Resources are adequate, though in ICT, even though numbers of computers are average for a primary school, they are needed in the network room to provide for some of the larger classes. Some classrooms are without a computer and this is limiting the way the pupils can use them when needed in lessons, and ultimately their wider understanding of the use of computers.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides a safe environment and cares for its pupils well. Support, advice and guidance are satisfactory, and pupils are involved satisfactorily in their school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Formal whole school health and safety procedures are good, though these are not always echoed into individual subjects.
- Staff work hard to develop supportive relationships with their pupils and they provide good guidance and support pupils well when they need help; there are effective arrangements to help new pupils settle into the school.
- Pupils' development is largely monitored informally; use of data to identify areas of weakness in progress is not fully effective.
- The school seeks, values and where appropriate acts upon pupils' views informally, but there are no systematic ways of getting views, such as a school council.

Commentary

19. Procedures for health and safety and child protection are good. School governors have carried out a comprehensive health and safety audit of the premises and there is good provision in place to ensure pupils' safety on school trips. Routine health and safety procedures are in place at whole school level. Nevertheless, staff are not fully aware of their responsibilities to assess risk in the provision of the curriculum, for example in science. The school has effective procedures for child protection in place and staff are aware of their responsibilities. The school works well with other agencies, such as social services, to ensure that pupils get specific additional help when they need it.
20. There is a policy of being an "open telling" school and staff are available for pupils with problems they wish to discuss. The staff genuinely care about their pupils and work well as a team to respond appropriately if a pupil is having problems. They monitor pupils' personal development informally and involve parents as necessary. Nearly all pupils feel that there is an adult they could go to if they had worries at school. The formal personal, social and health education provision includes regular *circle times* in which pupils have the opportunity to discuss any issues that are concerning them. Pupils with special educational needs are very well known to staff. They are closely monitored and they receive good support and guidance; this contributes to their good achievement.
21. Induction arrangements for new pupils are very effective. Parents agree that arrangements for children starting school help them to settle in quickly and it is clear that new pupils are helped to adapt to school routines well. There is close liaison with the preschool group in the village, who use the school facilities every week and so acclimatise the children to the school environment. There are regular meetings between pre-school and school staff, whilst there are good arrangements to keep parents informed and to answer any concerns they may have about their child settling in the Reception class.
22. Under-developed assessment systems restrict how well pupils' academic progress can be monitored. Their progress is monitored well in writing, where the results of half-termly assessments are carefully tracked by the deputy head. Data now exists to start to do the same in mathematics. However, there is no systematically recorded information about how well pupils are making progress in other subjects. The result is that it is harder for the school to plan

for increased emphasis on content areas that are weaker, however good the teaching in class. The result is that some aspects of subjects, for example rapid mental calculation within mathematics, are weaker than others for significant numbers of pupils.

23. Most parents believe that the staff encourage pupils to become mature and independent. It is part of the school's ethos to involve pupils as partners in their education, although there is no school council as yet, and no regular consultation by other means. However, pupils believe that most teachers listen to their ideas and value their views.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are satisfactory links with links with parents, who are supportive of the school. The school has good links with other schools and with the local village community, of which it is an integral part.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The annual reports on pupils' progress are good.
- Pupils' diaries provide good home-school communication for younger pupils.
- There are very good transfer arrangements from the local pre-school.
- The school has close links with its local church.

Commentary

24. Parents are supportive of the school and feel that they can see its positive influence on their children's learning and personal development. They find the staff approachable and feel well informed. Parents are provided with good information about the school and most are able to track their child's progress through the homework diary, which provides good two-way communication. However, the diaries are not being used for oldest pupils at the moment as they are being revised. Annual reports give good information on the progress of pupils, often featuring perceptive comments on their personal and social development as well as good summaries of their academic progress. There are good newsletters on the life of the school, although only published about every two months. Parents understand the school's policy on homework but opinion is divided as to whether the school should set more or set less; parental involvement with their child's homework, including hearing them read, is patchy. A large majority of parents think the school seeks their views sufficiently and takes them into account. There is an active Association of Parents and Teachers that runs social and fundraising events. A number of parents and other members of the community volunteer to help in school and their support is welcomed and valued.
25. As a church school, Evercreech makes considerable efforts to maintain links with its local parish; there is currently no incumbent in the parish and the post is sorely missed by the school. Pupils visit the church regularly to enjoy the spiritual atmosphere of this lovely old building on special occasions such as harvest festival; given the distance involved this represents a real commitment by the school. The local horticultural society comes into school to encourage pupils to participate in their biannual flower show, whilst the school choir sing at the annual general meeting of the local Women's Institute and also visit the local nursing home.
26. The school is active in working closely with the pre-school group in the village, ensuring a stress-free transfer as children move into formal education. One particularly strong feature is that the curriculum of the Reception class shows a continuity of approach with the pre-school, for example in communication, language and literacy. At the other end of the school, there is good liaison with the local secondary school. In addition to the good arrangements for Year 6 pupils to visit the school, there are particular arrangements for specific pupils to do so with the SENCO to support them; they take a camera to help them record their experiences and then share them with others. Specialist days provide an opportunity for more able pupils to meet children from other schools and work together in a stimulating atmosphere.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Leadership, including that of the headteacher, is satisfactory, and management is also satisfactory. The governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The monitoring of teaching by the headteacher has had a significant impact in improving its quality, but co-ordinators are not yet being given enough responsibility for monitoring.
- Co-ordinators have a good idea of what needs to be done in their subjects and are leading with enthusiasm. There is good leadership of English, science, special needs provision, religious education and music.
- The headteacher has established a good atmosphere of teamwork and support within the school.
- Performance data such as examination results are not yet routinely being analysed to find out what they show about progress and how to improve.
- Financial control is good.

Commentary

27. The governors took a significant part in helping the school to address its serious weaknesses after the last inspection, through full governing body meetings and through membership of the core group charged with improvement. They addressed the weaknesses in their own awareness of the situation in the school, and now have links to individual subjects. However, these are relatively new and governors are still fairly dependent of information received from the headteacher and deputy. In particular, though the numeracy governor has started to analyse data on mathematics results, most are still dependent on the headteacher's analyses of progress, and he and the deputy in turn are still developing their own knowledge of how results data can be analysed. Nevertheless, governors are now prepared to challenge and debate on matters of strategy, and there is a good feeling of teamwork.
28. The governors have ensured that almost all statutory requirements are met, but until recently missed the requirement to produce a race equality policy. The draft document is very basic, and has not been well adapted to the challenges of a school where almost all the children are from one background. The draft had not at the time of the inspection been presented to the full governing body. The lack of a policy has not had negative outcomes for the pupils, but provision for multicultural education is now an area in need of development in the school. The school is inclusive. Pupils with special educational needs, a significant group, are very well integrated and well provided for, and their achievement is good. There is no difference in the achievement of girls and boys.
29. The deputy headteacher was absent with illness during the inspection, so limited evaluation could be made of her contribution to leadership. Indications from documentation and the preliminary visit, however, were positive. The headteacher has worked hard on establishing a supportive atmosphere for staff in the school, and a positive climate for learning. He has ensured that the strengths of the last inspection are maintained but accepted the need to change the culture in order to raise standards. He has concentrated on standards in English and mathematics, but at the same time has been mindful of the whole curriculum and has encouraged co-ordinators well to take a lead in the direction of their areas. The co-ordinators are enthusiastic and have responded well to this. They are aware of what needs to be done through their own analyses, with many having interviewed pupils about their subjects. However, in most subjects curriculum management is not fully informed by co-ordinators' monitoring of teaching or of progress. The headteacher's own monitoring of teaching, largely in English and mathematics, has nevertheless had a significant effect on raising quality as well as informing his own evaluation of quality in the school. The school self-evaluation, completed before the inspection, closely matches the judgements in most areas of the inspection. The challenge to the leadership now is to move beyond the close focus on English and mathematics results,

whilst continuing the improvement. The teamwork is established, but as yet there has not been an informed debate on what direction the school should now take in its development.

30. The management of special educational needs is good, showing that the considerable investment in keeping a co-ordinator without direct classroom responsibilities has been effective. She is well organised and up to date in her professional development. She has established effective procedures for the early identification of pupils who need support, liaising with the pre-school. Support staff are effectively deployed and supported, and their performance also justifies the higher spending that their numbers demand.
31. The monitoring of teaching, with its very effective outcomes, is one of the strongest aspects of management in the school. Formal performance management is also in place, and is appropriately linked to professional development and school improvement planning. Results are now analysed by the headteacher and deputy, but this is comparatively new and they are still to some extent reliant on outside advice. Co-ordinators are not as yet involved in the analysis, and, in subjects where assessment needs developing, there is little progress data to monitor. The lack of established analysis of pupils' performance restricts the school's ability to apply best value principles, but their application is satisfactory overall because financial control is tight. There is certainly challenge, and consultation is fairly effective. The 2003 audit showed that financial management is good. There were only a very few minor points for improvement and these were quickly addressed.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	396673	Balance from previous year	51315
Total expenditure	413240	Balance carried forward to the next	34748
Expenditure per pupil	2550		

The balance carried forward from March 2003 was higher than it should normally be because money for capital expenditure was carried forward over the end of the financial year. The carry forward is projected to be appropriately lower in March 2004.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is good for children in the foundation stage and the children's achievement is one of the strengths of the school. Children are admitted to the Reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they become five. At the time of the inspection, they had only been in school on a part time basis for four weeks and were just starting to attend as a whole class for the morning session and lunchtime only. They enter school with a wide range of attainment, but overall this is around average for all areas of learning. Last Year's Year R entered with slightly lower standards and reached broadly average standards by the end of the year.

The provision is managed well and as a result achievement is at least good in all areas of learning, with a particular strength in personal, social and emotional development. Teaching during the last inspection was judged as sound. Teaching and learning are now consistently good in all areas of learning with a wide range of practical activities to stimulate the children and support their learning well. Teaching seen during the inspection showed higher expectations of the children in the present class and the children are now achieving well. A comparison with the written work of last year's Reception class indicated that children are achieving at a faster rate in their writing and mathematics this year. Main strengths of the teaching seen during the inspection include good detailed planning for all adults who are teaching or supervising children's activities. Their progress is also monitored well. All adults manage the children very well and the good ratio of adults to children ensures that the needs of all are well met. The last inspection identified a need for more resources and a secure outside play area. These have been addressed well. There are very good induction arrangements in place and very strong links with the local pre-school group (Acorns) that is on the school site.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children achieve very well because the good teaching ensures that they are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions at an early age.
- The children reach above average standards for their age by the end of the year.

Commentary

32. The teacher and other staff provide a secure environment where classroom routines are quickly and securely established. All children enter the room quietly and sit politely, listening carefully when the register is taken. They co-operate well with each other in group activities and already work well independently without an adult when necessary. The teacher provides a good balance of directed and self-chosen activities and there is an air of peaceful harmony at all times in the classroom.
33. From the outset, staff teach the children rules and responsibilities. There is a carefully established routine which includes '*Star of the Day* and the *Golden Chair*, in which all children participate. Children are given a reason for their choice as *Star of the Day* and are allowed to sit in the *Golden Chair* and undertake special responsibilities such as leading lines or taking the register to the office. Children with special educational needs are well integrated and receive good support. They and others are helped to maintain concentration by the interesting activities offered. As a result, even at this stage, children are able to sit quietly and work independently and are likely to reach above average standards by the end of the year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers and support staff make good opportunities to develop the children's language skills and teaching is good overall.
- Early reading and writing skills are taught systematically and well.

Commentary

34. Several of the newly admitted children have under-developed speaking and listening skills. All adults speak slowly and clearly, ensuring clear explanations of the tasks expected of children. They often model back clear speech of children's replies to questions. Expectations of attentive learning are met well by the children and signals for children to stop and listen are already well established and effective.
35. Because of the very good links with the pre-school group on site, which a good majority of the children have attended, there is continuity of approach to writing and the learning of letters and sounds. The structured approach and well thought out practical activities give good support to the good start made at the pre-school group. *Noisy Letters*, played by the children who sound out the letter on the card they have been given to all other children, while walking around the carpet area, is a good example of this. A good majority of the children in last year's Reception class met this early learning goal.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The range of well thought out practical activities ensures that early number work is well covered.
- Numbers are used well in other activities to reinforce learning.

Commentary

36. The children are provided with interesting tasks that are well matched to their mathematical development and the teaching and learning are good. Adults take every opportunity to develop mathematical language. For example, sorting elephants by colour, when small, medium and large was also used as criteria.
37. When reinforcing counting skills, literacy skills are also reinforced in such tasks as *draw three objects beginning with the letter 'h'*. The teacher used physical activities such as counting to eight jumps in a lesson in the hall as a good way of reinforcing one jump, one number as an established concept. Almost all children met the requirements for this area of learning in last year's Reception class.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

It was not possible to make an overall judgement of provision or standards in this wide area of learning, but the work seen was good. Children are using computers in the computer suite where, for example, they learn to control the mouse and pick up and move objects on a *Goldilocks* program. The children enjoyed the session and learned well, particularly when the teacher demonstrated turning baby bear round to sleep as she put him to bed.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children can use their bodies well to move in a range of ways and are starting to link movements.
- Children are already starting to evaluate their own and each other's work.

Commentary

38. The children enjoy outside physical play when they use wheeled vehicles, as well as whole class physical education lessons in the hall. During the inspection the children, working in the hall, were seen to slither, run, jump, skip and hop around and changed their mode of moving on the teacher's signal with a tambourine.
39. Children are learning to start to watch each other's movements and think quietly about how they can improve their own. Good opportunities are provided for children to use construction sets and use a range of equipment such as rollers and cutters for play dough, scissors, paintbrushes and pencils. Children met the standards for this area of learning in last year's Reception class.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good provision for role play in which children participate well.
- Good opportunities to use a range of materials.

Commentary

40. Careful resourcing of role play areas has much improved provision in this area. The present *Post Office* followed a visit to Evercreech Post Office and a good range of resources were obtained to provide exciting play. Stamps, envelopes and post cards are provided for children to write and post letters, as well as dressing up clothes to role play postmen and women. The planning identifies that further resourcing of imaginative role play areas will enable children to be introduced to story lines to act out narratives.
41. The children paint pictures of themselves, make collage faces, kites and of their favourite nursery rhymes such as Little Bo Peep. Evidence of all these are displayed attractively in their classroom. Last year almost all children met the required standards in this area of learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 2 are average and have improved since the last inspection, while those at the end of Year 6 are average in reading, but remain below average in writing.
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are underdeveloped and there is no planned programme to raise standards.
- Teaching and pupils' learning in Years 1 to 6 are good, and, as a result, achievement by the end of Year 2 is good, but this good teaching has had insufficient time to impact fully on pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6, which is satisfactory, rather than better.
- The subject has been well monitored and pupil performance data, particularly in writing, is well analysed, and used effectively to raise standards.

Commentary

42. Reading is systematically taught throughout the school, and a good stock of books is readily available in classrooms and the library. By Year 6 most pupils read confidently and can discuss characters and plots, and make predictions about how the book will develop. Most have good skills to use when selecting new books. The library is an attractive area and pupils know how to use it for research. Home school reading logs are well used to encourage parents to support their children's reading, although revised logs for the older pupils need to be implemented quickly to contribute to maintaining parental support. The presentation of pupils' written work is satisfactory, but the recently introduced marking policy is too complex for the older pupils, who understand it in their English work, but find it is inconsistently applied to other written work. Comments are supportive, but do not provide sufficient detail on how to improve and this inhibits pupils' progress. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported during literacy lessons by the special educational needs teacher or skilled learning support assistants, and as a result they achieve well.
43. Teachers do give pupils opportunities to use their speaking and listening skills in lessons through whole class and smaller group activities, but there is no planned programme to develop these skills. Pupils tend to answer questions in class with a few words, frequently not in a sentence and with mixed tenses, and they are not often encouraged to develop their answers. Teachers are not always proactive in encouraging pupils to speak with clear diction and pronunciation, and use the grammatical structures of Standard English. This under-development of speaking skills makes it harder to raise standards in pupils' written work.
44. Teachers plan their lessons well, sharing their learning objectives with the class, and maintain a good dialogue with the learning support assistants, who contribute well to pupils' learning. Pupils respond well when listening to the teachers, but there is not the same purpose and applications in the Year 3 to 6 classes when working collaboratively in pairs and groups, and teachers do not use strategies systematically to develop collaborative work and pupils' speaking and listening skills; an example of a strategy could be identifying regularly used 'response partners' - partners whom pupils turn to when directed by the teacher to discuss a point. Pupils are well managed and generally know how to use dictionaries, but most of the classrooms are not rich in the key vocabulary related to current aspects of learning.
45. The co-ordinator's leadership and management is good and has contributed to the improvement in writing since the last inspection. She has been thorough in maintaining and analysing pupil data, and teachers have been well supported in levelling pupils' work against national curriculum criteria. This information has been well used to set group targets within

classes, but these have not been developed further into individual short term achievable targets that pupils understand and that help them to progress more rapidly towards the next level in their writing.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

46. The national literacy strategy has been implemented well in terms of English lessons, but, although it does happen, literacy has not been systematically planned into other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils used their knowledge of non-chronological writing when composing an account of aspects of life in Ancient Greece they had seen on video. The older pupils use the library well for research. However, some of the oldest pupils do not enjoy writing about the science they have learnt, and they do not record enough in this subject. The lack of planned provision for encouraging pupils' speaking and listening skills described above is evident across the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 2 are average and have improved since the last inspection, while those at the end of Year 6 remain below average.
- Teaching and pupils' learning in Years 1 to 6 is good, and achievement by the end of Year 2 is good.
- Older pupils are not good enough at rapid mental calculation.
- The subject has been well monitored and pupil performance data analysed, but the information has not been used effectively to raise pupils' standards by the end of Year 6.

Commentary

47. Pupils in Years 1 to 3 have a secure grounding in number calculation, but the main weakness in pupils' mathematical ability in Years 4 to 6 is the inability of many pupils to calculate rapidly. They cannot easily recall their multiplication facts to 10 x 10, or use them to quickly derive the corresponding division facts. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson when pupils were working out percentages. While mental strategies are well taught there is no clear expectation of what pupils should know by the end of each year and how rapidly they should be able to calculate. As a result, despite good teaching, by Year 6 pupils' achievement is satisfactory, rather than better and standards are below average.
48. Teaching and pupils' learning in lessons seen were good with teachers planning effectively from the national numeracy strategy. Lessons start with a brisk mental arithmetic session which pupils enjoy, although insufficient use is made of devices such as individual number fans and whiteboards for all pupils to be actively involved; the use of such devices would also give the teacher a quick assessment of how well the class are performing. Classes are well managed during the main mathematical activities and learning support assistants well used to support pupils with special educational needs, who subsequently achieve well. An effective review session was seen at the end of a Year 6 lesson, when pupils were enthused to calculate simple percentages quickly by being challenged to work against a calculator. It is these quick-fire mental arithmetic sessions, actively involving all pupils, which need to be more consistently taught so as to raise pupils' standards in rapid mathematical calculations.
49. Although mathematics has not been a school focus, the co-ordinator has provided sound leadership. The teaching of mathematics has been well monitored and recent test results have been analysed to inform teachers' future planning, but no targets have been set. To raise standards this information needs to be used to set short term achievable targets that pupils understand, and must be rigorously monitored to ensure that pupils make appropriate progress.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50. Although the national numeracy strategy has been implemented well in mathematical lessons, it has not systematically been planned in other subjects. Mathematical skills are used in science when data is presented in the form of graphs and bar charts. Pupils used their measuring skills in design and technology and the older pupils' knowledge of calculations is used in constructing spreadsheets in information and communication technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement has been very good for the last two year groups of Year 6 pupils.
- The strong attention given to scientific enquiry – investigation and practical experiments – really enthuses pupils, and gives good support to their understanding.
- The oldest pupils have not recorded enough key points about their science to give good support to them when they look back over their work.
- Assessment of what pupils can do in science is limited, and so the teachers do not generally plan different work for different groups of pupils in the class, based on what they already know.
- Formal attention to safety is not always given when planning lessons.

Commentary

51. The standards seen in science were average in both Year 2 and Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 to 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. These judgements represent a slight drop in the very good achievement of the last two years in Year 6, but there is time for the current pupils to improve further before the end of the year. They are reaching similar standards in their knowledge and understanding of science and in their practical work. The effect of the good amount of practical work that they do is to enthuse them and support their understanding rather than build their practical skills in isolation from their knowledge.
52. Teachers throughout the school encourage the pupils to investigate and think about science in an enquiring way. The pupils enjoy the subject very much and this helps them remember what they have done even where they have limited written work, for example in last year's Year 5. In one Year 6 lesson during the inspection the skills of enquiry were very well taught, mostly through question and answer about an experiment they had started the previous week. The teacher drew out ideas from the pupils so that they made great progress in their understanding of how to control variables and the nature of scientific explanation. However, the lesson planning did not give the necessary formal attention to health and safety that its subject, micro-organisms, demanded. The pupils' health was not under threat in practice, but the right messages about safety were not given to them.
53. Teaching and learning are good in Years 3 to 6. There was limited evidence about the quality of teaching in Years 1 to 2, but it is at least satisfactory overall. The strength in practical work runs right through the school, because teachers share a vision of the importance of enquiry in the nature of science. Leadership of the subject is good. However, curriculum management is satisfactory rather than better. Teachers follow a scheme of work, and the different year groups are taught separately, ensuring that they study the content they should. However, monitoring of teaching has not taken place so some of the best practice is not fully identified and shared. Assessment is being introduced, but has only just started, so pupils neither know clearly how well they are doing nor what they should be aiming for longer term. The small amount of recorded work for the oldest pupils makes it hard, too, for teachers to use this to assess standards in retrospect. In lessons the pupils do have lesson objectives, drawn from the scheme of work, and they do understand them. In lessons, too, the teachers and support

assistants work hard to meet the needs of the different ability pupils with probing questions or helpful support. However, not enough attention is given in planning to how lesson activities might be different for different attaining pupils.

54. Improvement since the last inspection has been good in terms of results and achievement, but is satisfactory overall. As yet the subject's management structures such as frameworks for assessment and monitoring are not sufficiently secure to ensure that achievement remains good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are high at the end of Year 2, and achievement is very good in Years 1 to 2.
- Computers are not used enough on a day to day basis in classrooms, and pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not have a good enough understanding of how ICT is used in the world outside school.

Commentary

55. The pupils currently in Year 3, who have just finished Year 2, have a wide range of ICT skills. They use computers purposefully, very competently amending work, for example in creating pictures with the program *Dazzle*. However, they go beyond carrying out instructions. They are keen to demonstrate what they can find on the Somerset Intranet, and even to try to create instructions to control the movement of a *turtle* on the screen. They can already control a real programmable *roamer*. They want to make their word-processed work look good, changing the font they are using and the size of the font. They also have some awareness of the way computers are used outside school. The Year 6 pupils have moved a little beyond this stage but are not moving on to making links between what they are learning and how their work might be usefully applied. They have used email but have not reflected enough on what the advantages and disadvantages of it might be. They create documents such as a Christmas poster, but have not thought enough about whom the poster was for, and therefore what features they might want to use the ICT to create. For this reason, standards in Year 6 are below average, even though the Year 6 pupils have some sound technical skills. Overall their achievement is satisfactory, considering what they are achieving in ICT lessons now, their comparatively low standards in their Year 2 national tests and their current standards across the curriculum.
56. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but some very good teaching was seen in Year 1. Here resources were very well chosen to link the real world with modelling using a computer. Real teddies and their clothes, for example, were compared to a program in which the pupils chose clothes and dragged them across to dress a teddy on the screen. As they tried to dress the real teddies, having some trouble pushing arms into sleeves, they realised immediately that it was easier in the screens. The pupils were absolutely engrossed, whether dressing the real teddies or the screen versions, and the teacher and support staff used the opportunity very well to draw out other understanding, for example the idea of what to wear in different weathers. Older classes in the network room received satisfactory teaching, but the pace was much slower, and so the pupils sometimes became less attentive. The larger numbers of older pupils in classes present a challenge to teachers in the network room where they cannot all use the machines at once, and more thought could usefully be given to strategies that keep all pupils involved.
57. The new co-ordinator has achieved a lot in the four weeks she has been in charge, but it is too early to say that curriculum management is more than satisfactory. The *driving licence* introduced as a system of self-assessment for pupils is more suitable for the younger pupils, because it does not fully cover the aspects of computer use that the older ones now need to get to grips with. Teachers are confident in their use of the network room, as are support staff,

and training has been effective. Achievement has been maintained since the last inspection for Year 6, though the year group's standards are lower, and achievement and standards are improved for Year 2. Improvement overall is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

58. The computers in the classrooms, as opposed to the network room, are not used sufficiently often during ordinary classroom lessons, and some classrooms do not have a working computer (though overall numbers of computers in the school are about average nationally). This is not impeding the acquisition of ICT skills, but is not giving the right message that computers are a part of day to day work, not an add on, and makes it harder for teachers to broaden pupils' knowledge of ICT use in the world of work. The lessons in the network room do build on the curriculum taught in other subjects. For example, pupils were using their ICT lesson in Years 4/5 to plot graphs with data from a science lesson, and the Year R lesson was built around the class's knowledge of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected individually and is reported in full below. Inspectors also saw a lesson in history, but work in geography was not inspected.

The Year 3/4 history lesson seen was well taught. Standards were average and pupils achieved well because the work was practical and interesting.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good for pupils in Years 3 to 6.
- Religious education continues to be well taught and enjoyed within the school.
- Very good links with local churches enable pupils to explore artefacts and attend services for the main Christian festivals.
- Assessment systems are not fully established and marking does not help pupils to know how to improve.

Commentary

59. Standards are average overall and achievement is good in Years 3 to 6; standards are average and achievement satisfactory in Years 1 to 2. This is a broadly similar picture to that reported in the last inspection.
60. The main focus is on learning about Christian teaching as set out in the locally agreed syllabus, *Awareness, Mystery and Value*. Additionally, pupils learn about Islam and Judaism, which are compared and contrasted with Christianity and differences explained and valued. The teaching seen and evidence from work scrutiny and pupils' interviews indicate that the teaching is good. In the Year 4/5 lesson, pupils had studied the origins and importance of festivals of other faiths and were looking in depth at Christian festivals. In particular, the meaning of the Harvest Festival was being explored in order to compare and contrast with other faiths. Pupils have good knowledge of biblical stories, which they can retell accurately. Pupils learn well from a range of visitors such as the teacher and pupils from Zambia who visited recently and a past pupil who explained about her visit to New Zealand and Maori culture. Celebrations of the Chinese New Year were explored by pupils through the personal experience of a member of staff. Pupils were encouraged to learn more through first-hand experience. Additionally the Year 6 day in Wells Cathedral makes a good contribution to religious education, when pupils are

encouraged to explore faith. A weakness in the teaching is lack of dialogue in the marking, which does not help pupils to know how to improve sufficiently. Assessment systems are not fully established and therefore information is not used to inform teaching.

61. The school celebrates Harvest, Christmas and Easter in the local church. Assemblies are regularly taken by the vicar and good opportunities are made to explain the significance of the various robes worn and to explore artefacts when visits to the church are made. The leadership of the subject is good, but the present caretaker manager has not been able to monitor the teaching and standards in the subject to help to maintain the good achievement.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

There was not enough evidence to report on any of these subjects individually, because not enough teaching was seen or there was not enough evidence to judge achievement. However, work was sampled in design and technology, music and physical education, all of which were key areas identified for improvement in the last report. Work in art was not inspected.

Design and technology

62. No lessons of design and technology could be seen, but pupils' work was studied and pupils were interviewed about it. The subject was discussed with the co-ordinator and schemes of work were examined. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2, and below average at the end of Year 6. Achievement is good in Years 1 to 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 can make good plans and sketches of what they want to make. Parents have been involved well with evaluation, for example commenting on food the pupils have taken home. Pupils in Year 6 have made a wide variety of products, and used ICT in their designs. However, their choices have often been limited by the materials presented to them, and they have not reflected fully on the needs of the users of the things they are designing. Similarly, evaluation is sometimes superficial, without a real reflection on what could be improved and how. Nevertheless, these standards represent satisfactory improvement since the last inspection, and the subject is being managed satisfactorily.

Music

63. Two lessons of music were seen, one in Year 6 and one in Year 2. A discussion was also held with the co-ordinator and documentation was studied. One lesson was judged satisfactory and one lesson was judged good. In the good lesson the teacher and support staff worked effectively with pupils using a good range of percussion instruments, organising and managing pupils well. Standards are average in both Year 6 and Year 2 and achievement is satisfactory. In Year 2 the pupils showed that they could recognise how words and voices are used in music, and were able to use the terms *crescendo* and *diminuendo* as they played music loudly and softly. In Year 6 the pupils produced a sound track for a video cartoon clip, and were able to make suggestions for improvement, but some groups had difficulty in playing instruments together in their group performance. There is a choir and there are recorder clubs, as well as peripatetic music tuition in flute, guitar and clarinet. The curriculum was also enhanced last year by visiting musicians from Bolivia. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has monitored standards, and, having identified the need to give staff this support, has led training on the new scheme of work. She has an appropriate action plan for the future development of the subject, which has improved well since the last inspection.

Physical education

64. Two lessons of physical education were seen, in Year 1 and in Year 6. A discussion was also held with the co-ordinator and documentation was studied. Both lessons were taught well, and learning and achievement were good in the lessons. Teachers showed good subject knowledge and planned a good variety of challenging activities. Standards could not be judged for Year 2, as work was not seen, but they are average in Year 6. The pupils are able to use a variety of controlled movements, and can evaluate each other's work. However, they neither have the quality of confident movement nor the precision in their evaluations to raise standards to above average. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

65. There was not enough evidence to report on this area individually, but one lesson, *circle time* in Year 1, was sampled. The teaching was satisfactory, as were learning and achievement. Assemblies seen during the inspection also made a satisfactory contribution to this curriculum area.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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